A

PICTURE

OF

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

BY

ROBERT FELLOWES, A. B. OXON.

THE SECOND EDITION,

WITH

CORRECTIONS AND CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS.

Certainly it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in Charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of Truth.

LORD BACON.

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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

A Principal deſign of the preſent publication is, by a delineation of the character of Jeſus, to diſplay the genuine unſophiſticated ſpirit of his religion; and to ſhew what ought to be it's influence on the affections and the conduct of men in private life and in public ſtations. Some philoſophers of our times have recommended a ſpirit of univerſal philanthropy, to the extinction of all local and individual partialities.* I have

* Among the moſt ſingular of theſe is Mr. Godwin, author of an elaborate work, called "Political Juſtice." Mr. G. certainly poſſeſſes great vigor of mind; but how often does he become a mere dreamer of dreams, and a compounder of abſurdities! His ſyſtem is totally impracticable; and even if it were practicable it would be pernicious:—it would aboliſh all the endearments of love and charity, and ſteel the human heart againſt it's beſt ſympathies, with a more than ſtoical inſenſibility.

endeavoured to ſhow, that though Chriſtianity inſpires univerſal benevolence, it encourages thoſe individual ſympathies which are it's foundation; and without which, univerſal philanthropy is but as a "ſounding braſs or a tinkling cymbal." The name of philanthropy may make a ſweet ſound, but it is but a ſound without the obſervance of the leſſer charities.

Many have repreſented the Chriſtian temper as of the moroſe and ſullen kind; and have thought it criminal for a Chriſtian to engage in the buſtle of the world, and to ſhare in the gaieties of life. But the example of Jeſus ſanctions no ſuch concluſions. He did not make faſting and prayer the key to heaven. He did not enjoin the ſad but the cheerful countenance. Habits of ſolemn devotion he commanded and he practiſed; but his example proves that, that ſpecies of devotion is moſt agreeable to heaven, which abounds moſt in acts of beneficence to man.

The builders of theological ſyſtems ſeem uſually to have paid too much attention to the writings of St. Paul, and too little to the doctrines and the practice of Chriſt; but I think that a modern believer has very little concern with the epiſtles of the Apoſtle. Thoſe epiſtles were written on particular occasions and on temporary topics, to combat the fleeting hereſies, the local and perſonal corruptions of the day. They can, therefore, but ſeldom be applied to the general doctrines of Chriſtianity. Had Chriſtians uniformly attended to this, we ſhould probably never have heard of that diſtinction between faith and charity, with which enthuſiaſts have polluted pure Chriſtianity.

A Chriſtian ought excluſively to conſider what were the doctrines, and what was the practice of Jeſus; which may eaſily be collected from the accounts which the Evangeliſts have left us of his actions and his diſcourſes; and according to theſe we ought, as much as poſſible, to regu-

late our doctrine, our affections and our practice. The doctrines of Jeſus, as they have been delivered by the Evangeliſts, are plain and ſimple to all capacities; but the epiſtles, filled with alluſions to evaneſcent topics, and to ſchiſms which no longer disturb the church, are involved in a ten-fold obſcurity, in which even ſagacity and learning will be for ever bewildered. Why then, when we can walk in the light, ſhould we prefer ſtumbling in darkneſs? Is it becauſe we delight more in error than in truth? or becauſe we imagine that there is no piety, where there is no myſtery?

Another cauſe which has greatly contributed to obſcure the true genius of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, is, that the majority of thoſe who have ſet themſelves down to the ſtudy of the ſubject, have rather endeavoured to make Chriſtianity conform to their opinions, than make their opinions conform to Chriſtianity. Slaves to ſome darling theory or ſome early prepoſſeſſions, they

have rather ſought for texts to confirm theſe, than to elucidate the truth by rational and diſpaſſionate enquiry.

This is a principal reaſon why we have ſo many ſchemes of Chriſtianity, and ſo many ſects of Chriſtians. Individuals, inſtead of endeavouring to diſcover the truth, as it is in Jeſus, have endeavoured to pervert it, to their own narrow prejudices and partial views. But I truſt that we have arrived at an age, when the enquirers into the doctrines of revelation, no longer blinded by the obſtinacy of bigotry or the credulity of ſuperſtition, will cheerfully relinquiſh error to embrace truth; and will be leſs directed by vanity than by love to God and to mankind. Had the evidences and tenets of the Chriſtian religion been conſtantly inveſtigated with theſe affections, and with no other biaſs than a biaſs to benevolence, Skepticiſm could never have prevailed ſo much in the world; there would have been leſs bitterneſs and diſcordancy

among believers; and infidelity would, at leaſt, have wanted one ſubject of triumph, in the implacable animoſities of Chriſtians againſt Chriſtians.

It is an abſurd and a dangerous notion, that we can ſerve the cauſe of revelation by limiting the right of free diſcuſſion, or checking it by perſecution. Perſecution always increaſes the evil it is intended to remedy; and religious opinions, which reſpect the intercourſe between man and his maker, ought for ever to be free from human interruption. They are too ſacred for the cognizance of any earthly tribunal.

There ſeems to be a principle in human nature, ever jealous of the leaſt uſurpation on the right of private judgment, particularly in religious concerns; and which, though it often ſeem irregular and capricious in it's operations, was yet providently planted in us, by divine wiſdom, as a ſtrong auxiliary to truth, and a counteract-

ing cauſe of tyranny and perſecution. Had not mankind poſſeſſed this principle of counteraction, Chriſtianity, when the miraculous effuſions of the Holy Spirit had ceaſed, might have ſunk lifeleſs and exhauſted under ſucceſſive perſecutions. Truths, the moſt uſeful to mankind, which have commonly been attacked at their firſt appearance, by bigotry or by malice, might have periſhed as ſoon as they were born, and the moral and the intellectual world might have been covered with darkneſs. It was this principle which animated Luther and the early reformers, and ſhook the ſolid and artfully cemented fabric of Popery to it's baſe. It is this principle, which arming the conſcience and the reaſon of man with an energy, proportionate to the fury that oppoſes their free exerciſe, has ſo often cauſed the diffuſion of opinions, to keep pace with the rage that has ſtruggled for their ſuppreſſion.

As it is the colliſion of mind with mind, that diſcovers new truths and elucidates old, Chriſ-

tians ought by no means to diſcourage the diſcuſſion of the evidences of their religion. They ought rather to court ſuch diſcuſſion, and engage in it themſelves, without any of that ſpirit of bitterneſs, which often diſgraces even the advocates of a good cauſe, and degrades the inveſtigation of ſacred truths into a petty perſonal contention.

Truth ſhould be ſought for truth's ſake; not for the pleaſure of expoſing an adverſary, or for the glory of victory, but for the ſake of diminiſhing error and of diffuſing knowledge. And ſurely the truths of Chriſtianity, of all others, ought not to be diſcuſſed with rancour, but in the mild ſpirit of him from whom they came. The Chriſtian ought to anſwer argument by argument, and not to ſeek the energies of logic in the vindictiveneſs of perſecution. Let the believer and the unbeliever know, that Chriſtianity can ſtand by argument; that it can derive no ſtrength from rage and perſecution; and that,

that only deſerves the name of faith which is founded on ſober and rational conviction.

It is full time that the evil ſpirit of perſecution ſhould be laid at reſt for ever. After the experience of eighteen centuries, it is time that mankind ſhould at laſt be convinced, that opinions, if true, can never be vanquiſhed by oppreſſion, and if falſe, many a melancholy page in hiſtory might have taught us, that human errors yield more certainly to mildneſs than to rage, to reaſon than to puniſhment.*

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* When a political ſyſtem is getting into diſrepute, there ſeems to me to be but one way to retrieve it's character and to maintain it's authority; and that is, by making the people in general feel the happineſs it produces, and their intereſt in ſupporting it.

When the benevolent Count Rumford undertook to reform the moral ſentiments of the Bavarian beggars, he firſt rendered them eaſy and comfortable in their circumſtances. A man is never ſo much averſe to morality as when he is ſtarving with hunger. That diſtreſs which is irretrievable breaks the ſpirit of independence, the ſource of honeſt and virtuous endeavour, and produces the loweſt ſtate of moral degradation. In this abject ſtate, the individual, ceaſing to perceive the bleſſings of civil order, grows impatient of it's reſtraints and anxious for it's diſſolution. He becomes fit for all kinds of atrocities! If eaſy circumſtances do not always produce morality, they are, at leaſt, moſt favour-

Chriſtian charity ſhould incline us to forbearance towards each other; chriſtian humility ought long ago to have inſtructed mankind, that thoſe who claim the right of perſecuting others for their opinions, are themſelves as fallible as thoſe they perſecute. Let us have done with

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able to it's production; for he who is in a ſtate of wretchedneſs, approaching to deſpair, can hardly fail of being hoſtile to thoſe laws of political juſtice, which conſtitute the individuality of property, and which are the ſtrong baſe of ſocial morality, and the ſacred cement of civil government. No revolution could poſſibly take place in that country, where every individual was intereſted in the preſervation of civil order; or, in other words, was attached by a reciprocal intereſt, to the practice of the duties of reciprocal juſtice. The governors of mankind cannot give too much attention to this principle, if they wiſh to identify their own power with the intereſts and the affections of the people, and to unite all the gradations of civil ſociety, by the connecting bond of a ſympathetic benevolence.

A communion of happineſs is not only not incompatible with a diſparity of property, but is inattainable without it. The greateſt happineſs which mankind can enjoy on earth, ariſes from a benevolent intercourſe with each other. Were all men equal in circumſtances, there would be no room for a reciprocity of kindneſſes. A diſparity of conditions occaſions a diſparity of wants, and gives riſe to moſt of the affections which gladden life. The complicated and diverſified circumſtances of mankind warm into life and ſtimulate into action thoſe benevolent ſympathies which are the ornaments of our ſpecies, and the prolific cauſes of a reciprocity of happineſs. Without them we ſhould be abſorbed in a brutal ſelfiſhneſs, and acquainted with none but the loweſt animal enjoyments.

that vehement, dogmatiſing, intolerant and ſanguinary ſpirit, which in former ages burned it's victims in the flames; and which, in the preſent, has opened far and wide the ſluices of human gore, and filled the earth with ſpectacles of miſery !!!

The times themſelves, by their awful and tremendous aſpect, portending the wrath of heaven on our preſumption, our animoſity and our crimes, ought to induce us to return to a ſyſtem of reciprocal benevolence and moderation. To ſuffer a mere difference of opinion to make us as hoſtile to each other, as if we were beings of a different ſpecies, appears a ſtrange mockery of the religion we profeſs; whoſe features are mildneſs, and whoſe precepts are love.

Were the deſolating animoſity, which at this moment ſeparates from each other ſtates and individuals, to be perpetual, even a righteous man might be almoſt tempted to loath exiſtence! But

let us hope, that theſe days, dark and diſmal as they now appear, will be ſhortened by the All-wiſe and All-good Diſpenſer of individual and of national felicity. Though at this moment the world be teeming with revolutions, though thrones be tottering to their fall, though changes the moſt important have happened ſo rapidly, that they almoſt appear as the viſions of a dream, let us with calm reſignation, truſt that the Divine Providence is buſily employed in this ſolemn drama; arranging all it's parts on the wiſeſt plans, and diſpoſing them, notwithſtanding the gloomy ſadneſs of intermediate diſorders, for a concluſion, favourable to virtue, to piety and to happineſs.

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HARBURY,
APRIL 3, 1798.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE favourable reception of the firſt edition of this work, has encouraged the author to publiſh the preſent, enlarged, and he hopes, improved edition. The manner, in which he has treated the moſt important of all ſubjects, has, he truſts, however diſpleaſing it may have been to ſome few individuals, been generally approved.

The lovers of bitterneſs, the fomenters of animoſity, and the champions of intolerance will take no pleaſure in the following pages; but the author hopes, that the friends of revealed truth and of human happineſs will not have occaſion to regret either the expence of the publication, or the time it may employ. The author is not the timid or obſequious votary of any party.

He has not been ſcrupulouſly delicate about adjuſting his opinions to the ſtandard of faſhion; careleſs of perſonal favour or emolument, he has ſedulouſly ſought for truth in the ſanctuary of the ſcriptures. Inſtead of tuning the harmony of his notions to the breath of every fleeting intereſt; he has endeavoured, with unfeigned ſincerity, to direct the steps of his fellow creatures, by the torch of Chriſtian love, to life eternal. If by the grace of Divine Providence, without which the author has an undoubting conviction that *all his exertions muſt be fruitleſs*, he is made the inſtrument of ſpreading the unſullied light of the true goſpel, or of exciting the flame of genuine benevolence in only one individual, he will feel a happineſs which wealth could not give, and which poverty cannot take away.

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ROBERT FELLOWES,

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February 15, 1799.

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ERRATA.

☞ *THE Reader is requeſted to correct and pardon the following errata: the Author regrets that they are ſo numerous; but they were occaſioned by circumſtances, which he could not controul.*

PAGE	LINE	
10	3	Note, for *wavering* read *waving*.
11	7	note, for *foilage* read *foliage*.
16	5	for *which the* read *which*.
19	5	for *deviſed* read *derived*.
19	7	for *ſaying* read *ſayings*.
23	2	for *Eaangeliſts* read *Evangeliſts*.
26	14	for *as* read *ſo*.
49	23	note, for *general* read *genial*.
61	10	note, for *will probably be* read *will be*.
62	18	note, for *diſguſt* read *diſtruſt*.
81	17	for *map* read *maſs*.
84	9	note, for *million* read *millions*.
86	29	note, for *not ſo profound* read *not profound*.
87	9	note, for *apathies* read *apathy*.
90	20	note, for *of the Apoſtles* read *of the other Apoſtles*.
90	21	note, for *emotions* read *emotion*.
92	3	for *ſenſations* read *ſenſation*.
93	6	for *to caſt* read *to be caſt*.
95	3	for *fulleſt* read *fitteſt*.
98	2	for *roofs* read *roots*.
99	22	for x, xi. read xix.
100	1	for *no* read *not*.
100	16	for *principle* read *principles*.
103	14	for *to the calmer* read *to calmer*.
103	20	for *leads* read *laſts*.
105	5	for *and the* read *and of the*.
107	11	note, for *ariſes* read *raiſes*.
108	5	for *no limits* read *no other limits*.
104	14	for *in the waſte* read *in this waſte*.
109	4	for *misfortunes* read *misfortune*.
115	7	note, for *prediliction* read *predilection*.
115	19	note, for *ſlept* read *ſlept*.
115	26	note, for *attrihute* read *attribute*.
118	23	note, for *negnect* read *neglect*.
148	5	for *congenial to* read *congenial*.
193	1	note, for *ſuppoſiſtion* read *ſuppoſition*.
220	22	for *intereſt* read *intereſts*.
229	5	for *faculty* read *facility*.
233	4	for *that* read *had*.
236	7	for *changes or depredation* read *change or deprivation*.

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*** *IN the peruſal of the work, it is not improbable that the Reader will diſcover a few other errata; and for which, as well as thoſe noticed above, the Author ſolicits his kind indulgence.*

A PICTURE OF
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

The character of Jeſus, as it has been repreſented by the four Evangeliſts, an argument for the truth of Chriſtianity.

THE character of Jeſus, as it has been drawn by the Evangeliſts, affords a ſtrong preſumptive proof of the truth of Chriſtianity. The features of it are ſo ſtriking, and yet ſo conſiſtent with each other, that it ſeems abſurd, at firſt ſight, to ſuppoſe it a fiction;—and a fiction of a few peaſants and fiſhermen. Even the friends to infidelity muſt allow it to be the moſt ſingular character that is to be found in the annals of the world: and it's ſingularity does not ariſe ſo much from it's particular diſſimilitude to others, as from it's ſuperiority, in all particulars, to every character of

which hiſtory has made any mention in any age. The writers of romance never even feigned a character ſo perfect and excellent. It was beyond the virtue of mortality to equal, and the wit of mortals to imagine.

The difficulty of giving harmony and conſiſtency to a feigned character, and to one placed in extraordinary circumſtances, and repreſented as poſſeſſing extraordinary powers, will be acknowledged by all who ever made the eſſay in works of imagination.

The character of Jeſus, is not drawn by the Evangeliſts in the broad lines of vulgar panegyric; but in the artleſs and ſimple touches of a delicate pencil. His praiſes are not ſounded in our ears. His virtues are not particulariſed; they are not even named; but they are more ſtrongly imprinted in our minds, than if they had been lauded a thouſand times in all the ſplendour of eloquence, by the diſcourſes, the incidents and the actions of his life. And all theſe diſcourſes, incidents and actions, ſuppoſing them a fiction, muſt have been moſt artfully and ably managed indeed! They are all made ſo aptly to combine, as to repreſent the moſt perfect unity and identity of character.

If, therefore, the Evangeliſts did not paint from life; if they have related diſcourſes which were never delivered, incidents which never happened, features of character and ſhades of manners which they never beheld, they muſt have been, though confeſſedly without taſte or literature, men of the moſt exquiſite taſte and diſcernment which were ever known. Had they no original before them, they have deſcribed an imagined reſemblance moſt artfully, and yet moſt inartificially.

But can any candid examiner believe, that the Evangeliſts have painted a non-exiſtence? will he not rather allow that they have delineated the diſcourſes, actions and manners of Jeſus, ſuch as they were, and ſuch as they witneſſed them to be, in the language of candour, of truth and ſimplicity?

We are, beſides, to conſider — that the character of Jeſus is not drawn by one perſon only; but by four different hands; all of whom, palpably, deſcribe the ſame original. In particular circumſtances, and, as it were, ſhades of their narration, they differ; but, amid a diverſity of circumſtances, they do not exhibit the leaſt caſt of a diverſity of character.

This conſideration is of great importance; becauſe, had they been deſcribing a fictitious character only, it is more than probable, that their differences would have deſtroyed the appearance of it's individuality and identity. But, at preſent, theſe differences take no more from the individual likeneſs, than if ſeveral painters ſhould repreſent the ſame identic features, and only differ in a few minute folds or ornaments of the drapery.

The Evangeliſts preſerve a perfect conſiſtency and uniformity of character, amid a multitude of petty variations; and which variations only prove, that they did not write in concert; but that, like honeſt men, they delivered the truth, and nothing but the truth, to the beſt of their knowlege and conviction. But had they painted a non-exiſtence, they muſt have written in concert: for ſeveral perſons can never be ſuppoſed to have imagined a ſimilar fiction, without the moſt glaring diſcordancies.* And, ſuppoſing that the Evangeliſts did

* In the relation of the ſame fact, by different individuals, it will always happen that ſome particulars will be mentioned by one, which are omitted by another; and "*vice verſa.*" But this is not ſufficient to ſhake the credibility of any narrative whatever. Were any one, at this moment,

write in concert, how are we to account for the particular diſſimilitudes which are viſible in their narration?

It may be ſaid, that by an exceſs of refinement in fraud, ſuch diſſimilitudes were the effect of colluſion; but this colluſion, of which there is not the leaſt ap-

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to fall down before my door and break his leg, and were twelve perſons preſent, it is more than probable that all the twelve would relate the ſame fact in a ſomewhat different way. They would differ in ſome minute and incidental circumſtances; but they would all agree, without the leaſt variation, that the man broke his leg.

No one can have been much preſent in courts of juſtice without obſerving the incidental variations that are conſtantly occurring in the teſtimony of even honeſt and credible witneſſes. In the narrative of the reſurrection, by the four Evangeliſts, their ſeveral variations may be conſidered either under the head of omiſſions or additions; or as indiſtinct diſcriminations of the preciſe order of time, in which the incidental circumſtances or ramifications of the ſame event took place. It is by no means uncommon for hiſtorians, either for the ſake of a more lucid arrangement of their ſubject, or of placing ſome great event in a ſtronger light; to invert the natural order of ſome minute, immaterial and aſſociated occurrences, and to place them in an order different from their literal, arithmetical and chronological ſeries. It is by no means improbable, that the Evangeliſts, in recording the reſurrection, neglected ſome of the leaſt fractions of chronology. Hence there may ariſe ſome apparent confuſion in their ſeveral relations.

pearance, muſt be proved, before it can be believed; * and, could it be proved, it would render the Evangeliſts, in whom we cannot trace the leaſt talents for impoſture, the ableſt impoſtors that ever conquered the credulity of mankind.

Which ever way the advocates for infidelity attempt to get rid of that argument for the truth of Chriſtianity, which is ſupplied by a candid examination of the character of Jeſus, they will, I am perſuaded, find themſelves involved in contradictions and abſurdities; from which there is no eſcape, but by allowing the integrity of the relators and the truth of the relation.

Admitting the truth of the relation, the truth of the miraculous powers aſcribed to Jeſus, and the truth of

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* There is reaſon to believe that neither Matthew, Mark, nor Luke had ſeen each other's goſpels, at the time of writing their own. John ſeems to have written with a view to ſupply the omiſſions of the former Evangeliſts; and particularly to give us a farther inſight into the nature of Chriſt's miſſion, and of his union with and dependance on the Father, than they had done. Hence, in conſidering the queſtion of Chriſt's divinity, we ſhould pay particular attention to St. John's goſpel; as that is more full and ſatisfactory on the ſubject than the goſpels of the other Evangeliſts.

the Chriſtian religion follow of courſe: but there are many Deiſts, who, though they do not reject the whole account of the diſcourſes, incidents and actions of Jeſus, are yet only willing to admit it, as an heterogeneous mixture of truth and fiction; and, conſequently, according to whom, the character of Jeſus muſt have been, in part, taken from life, and, in part, from imagination.

For a moment, allowing this ſuppoſition, how are we to draw the line where the truth ends and the falſehood begins? All the diſcourſes and actions of Jeſus, which are recorded in the goſpels, are intimately cemented together;—not by a connection of place, or by a continued chain of ſubordinate cauſation,—but by a certain peculiarity of character; which cannot eſcape the notice of the dilligent examiner; but which hardly admits of a definition, through the imperfections of language.*

* This peculiarity of character, is a good deal connected with the impreſſiveneſs, the majeſty, and, at the ſame time, the genuine, unaffected ſimplicity of the manner; (on which I have ſpoken more at large in the next chapter;) but this is not all; and language is as inadequate to catch all the fleeting and intermingling tints and combinations of ſenſation, as it is to delineate all the tints and combinations of nature's ever-varying forms.—On it's inadequacy, as it relates to pictureſque deſcription, a ſubject which has lately been ſo much in faſhion, I will ſay a few words.

By this peculiarity they are, if I may ſo expreſs it, ſo completely identified with themſelves, and with each other, that

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Nature is characteriſed by diverſity. In every landſcape or view, with which ſhe is adorned, though there may be a general caſt of reſemblance, yet there is always a great variety in the colouring — in the intermixture of light and ſhade — in the forms of particular objects, and their ſeveral combinations. But try to transfuſe an exact likeneſs of theſe things into the artificial net-work of language; and you will ſoon diſcover that the terms of taſte are not ſufficiently copious or preciſe to expreſs all the diverſified ſenſations of beauty; and that the vocabulary of admiration is ſo jejune, that it is ſoon worn thread-bare.—Even the picturesque deſcriptions of Mrs. Radcliffe, though combined with all the exquiſite taſte of genius, and mellowed by the bluſh of ſentiment, ſoon tire upon the ear and pall upon the ſenſe.

In language, we may paint the general forms of rocks, woods, rivers, mountains and vallies, precipices, cataracts and torrents, and may group theſe ſeveral objects together, ſo as to give a faint reſemblance of Nature's ſcenes; but it is impoſſible to hit, as it were, that verſatility of touch, which ſhe every where employs; and which prevents the forms of any two objects, however ſimilar, from being the ſame. Hence we are ſoon wearied with that monotonous uniformity, which pervades the deſcriptions of picturesque travellers; though we ſhould have experienced neither languor nor fatiety in viewing the original ſcenes. In nature, every thing is infinitely diverſified; but the variety of her dreſſes, her ſhapes, her combinations eludes the moſt ſubtle machinations of the genius of language.

In language, we have no other means of characteriſing the individuals of a ſpecies of objects, than by the uſe of epithets.—But the ſtock of epithets,—I do not mean, of thoſe vacant ſounds, which are uſed merely for the purpoſe of harmoniſing periods (a purpoſe, to which they are ſo copiouſly applied by modern writers), but of thoſe epithets, which have a definite ſignification, and which excite diſtinct ideas, the ſtock is ſcanty indeed; and very inadequate to ſhow that particularity and, as it were,

it is impoſſible to mark the ſeparation between the genuine and the fictitious hiſtory. If we allow the diſcourſes of Jeſus to be genuine, and yet his miracles to be falſe, we ſhall not eſcape the greateſt embarraſſment. For the diſcourſes aſſert the miracles; and the miracles confirm the diſcourſes. Take away the genuineneſs of the one, and you deſtroy the genuineneſs of the other. We muſt either allow, that the diſcourſes and the miracles are both genuine, or both fictitious. If we adopt the latter ſuppoſition, we ſhall ſtill be involved in thoſe inconſiſtencies which I have mentioned above.

Again—if we ſuppoſe that the diſcourſes of Jeſus are a mixture of truth and fiction, of what Jeſus really ſpoke, and what the Evangeliſts imagined; ſtill it will be impoſſible to diſtinguiſh where the firſt ends, and the laſt begins: for, in all the numerous diſcourſes which the Evangeliſts have aſcribed to Jeſus, there is, without

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individuality, which is Nature's impreſs on every one of her works. By epithets, we can expreſs a few general ideas of magnitude, of form and colour; but we can ſpecify only a very ſlender portion of that variety of magnitudes, of forms and tints which *An Un-ſeen but Well-known Hand* has ſcattered, with a ſort of careleſs profuſion through the whole expanſe of creation.

an identity of ſenſe or of expreſſion, an identity of manner, of ſtyle and character. No man, of the leaſt acuteneſs, can read the goſpels without being convinced of this. But this identity of manner, of ſtyle and character, in the diſcourſes, ſeems almoſt impoſſible to be reconciled with the ſuppoſition of their being a combination of truth and fiction; for falſehood never could have been patched upon truth, and particularly by different hands, and in ſuch a variety of inſtances, without the point of their conjunction being very perceptible. A modern architect, might, with more probability of ſucceſs, attempt to reſtore the remains of an ancient pile of Grecian ſimplicity, or of Gothic exuberance,* ſo

* It is ſurpriſing how the artiſts of the middle ages could communicate ſuch lightneſs to ſuch maſſy fabrics;—how they could inſinuate that airy, wavering grace, which is ſeen in their immenſe ramifications of ſtone, which, growing from maſſy columnar trunks, form a ſhady, ſolemn avenue from one part to another of their religious buildings! How did they turn their beautiful arches and raiſe their heaven-ſhooting ſpires? In every thing elſe, they ſeem to have been deficient in the firſt principles of taſte; but in architecture they rivalled the excellence of Greece; if not in ſymmetry of proportions, at leaſt in grandeur of deſign, in ſtrength of execution, in fertility of invention, and in variety of decoration. The reaſon ſeems to be, that, in architecture, they followed nature, and looked into nature's book, for bold and maſterly conceptions; in architecture, they diſclaimed all prieſtcraft or preſcription—while, in every thing elſe, they were the ſtupid ſlaves of bigotry and ſuperſtition.

that the moſt diligent and curious obſerver could not diſcern the difference between the old work and the new.

The features of truth, can ſeldom be brought into ſuch an intimate, and, as it were, impalpable, and invincible union with thoſe of falſehood, as that the latter ſhall be entirely concealed. And yet this extreme probability muſt have happened, on the ſuppoſition—that the diſcourſes of Jeſus are a maſs of truth and fiction.

The Ancient Goths uſed to worſhip the Deity in groves and woods; and, perhaps, ſometimes in thoſe immenſe caverns, which are occaſionally formed by nature among the rocks. When, in the progreſs of civilization, they left their woods and caves, and began to erect artificial churches —they imitated in ſtone, the ſhade, ramifications and ſolemnity of their woods, groves and caves. The doors, or arches, which lead to their places of worſhip, they decorated with a profuſion of foilage and tendrils; which, with a ſort of negligent wildneſs ſpread over the way.—This was either intended to repreſent the entrance to a cavern, about which are ſcattered a profuſion of ſhrubs, bines or wildflowers; or the opening into a wood, formed by the oppoſite trees, intertwining with each other.

The great weſt entrance into Litchfield cathedral is remarkable beautiful; in the middle ariſes the trunk of a tree, exactly delineated; and which, by an expanſion of it's branches, on each ſide, forms a paſſage through two arches; — whence the whole avenue of columns, with their ſpreading ramifications towards each other, and along the roof, forms a perſpective, which ſtays attention by it's grandeur and it's beauty.

Allowing the genuineneſs of the diſcourſes, the truth of the miracles is a neceſſary deduction. In the diſcourſes, there is a frequent aſſumption of miraculous powers, and a preſumption of their notoriety. On theſe powers, Jeſus ſolely and excluſively reſts the truth of his miſſion. How would any perſon, of ſuperior good ſenſe and diſcernment, as even the enemies to Jeſus muſt allow him to have been, have falſely arrogated the poſſeſſion of ſuch powers? Would he have reſted his whole claim to veracity on a groundleſs aſſertion? Would he have diſgraced himſelf by a falſehood, of which, every peaſant in Iſrael could have convicted him?

It will be no eaſy matter to ſolve theſe difficulties, which I have ſtated, without allowing that Jeſus delivered thoſe diſcourſes which the Evangeliſts have aſcribed to him; and wrought thoſe miracles, with which they are ſo frequently aſſociated.

A PICTURE OF
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

Conſiderations on the marks of energy and authority that characteriſed the manner of Jeſus; and, of which, the features are accurately preſerved in the narrative of the Evangeliſts.

ST. Mathew tells us (vii. 28.) that when Jeſus had finiſhed his ſermon on the mount—"the people were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes."

The authoritative manner of Jeſus, is diſtinctly ſeen through the whole of the Sermon. He appears rather like a king pronouncing his decrees, and inveſted with power to enforce their obſervance, than as an humble peaſant, without friends or power. The contraſt, be-

tween the manner of the ſpeaker and his circumſtances, is very remarkable; and is a ſtrong proof, that he was no impoſtor.

Impoſture is uſually obſequious and inſinuating when in weakneſs; preſumptuous and overbearing when in power. In the former ſtate it flatters and careſſes the the paſſions of others; in the latter it gratifies it's own.

Now,—were Jeſus an impoſtor, he muſt have poſſeſſed a degree of arrogance, unuſual even to ſuch men; and he muſt have attained the very difficult art of giving it that air which commands attention and reſpect, rather than that which, particularly when aſſumed in circumſtances of inferiority and indigence, provokes averſion and diſdain.

Emotions of reſpect, ſeldom fail to be excited by that genuine authority, of which, an inward conſciouſneſs appears in the outward aſpect; while contempt is the uſual conſequence of a ſupercilious temerity; which bluſters, and apes the geſture of ſtrength, to diſguiſe it's impotence.

Genuine authority, whenever it is viſible in the manner, ſoon transfuſes it's influence into the breaſts of the beholder; it is formed to excite mingled ſenſations of affection, of eſteem and reverence; while aſſumed and factitious authority, which is juſtly named arrogance, is calculated to produce no other emotions than thoſe of contempt and ridicule.

Genuine authority, often poſſeſſes a force greater than that of phyſical power;* and the former, by a mere look or geſture, will, ſometimes, counteract the ſtrength of the latter—or, at leaſt for a moment, palſy it's action.

Cæſar ſeems to have thought his power weak, till he could ſtrengthen it by the authority of Cicero. The uſurper wiſely diſcriminated between moral and phyſi-

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* The true diſtinction between power and authority, as far as they are ſubjects of political conſideration, is this.—

"Power is phyſical force; acts by mechanical impulſion, and operates on the will by the fears: but authority is rather a moral force; which rules at pleaſure the voluntary powers, by it's faſcinating ſway over the affections and the heart." *See ſermons to the "Friends of Peace."* 12mo. *Fol.* 57. *White.*

cal force; he was therefore anxious to aſſociate the terror of his arms, with the reſpect which was attached to the virtue and the genius of Tully. Cicero, conſidered abſtractedly as an individual, was of no importance; but, the authority he had obtained, and of which the the influence was combined with his very name, gave a ſanction to any cauſe and any party he eſpouſed.

Louis the XVI. the laſt and the beſt of the French monarchs, was never greater than in his misfortunes. Stripped of phyſical power, he ſeemed great by the power of authority. When ſummoned before the barbarous tribunal, which condemned him to an undeſerved death, the majeſty of authority had ſurvived the wreck of the majeſty of power. The manner of Louis, which was characteriſed by true greatneſs, ſeems to have inſpired ſenſations of reverence, even in the breaſts of his ferocious accuſers.

But, without that ſplendor of eloquence, which in Tully captivated applauſe, or that ſplendor of ſtation, which, in Louis, dazzled the beholder, even in it's ſetting ray, there ſeems to have been, in Jeſus, an air of authority, at once impreſſive and venerable. This made

him command reſpect in the garb of diſtreſs; and breathed around him a reverential awe of majeſty, in circumſtances, in which any common mortal would have been paſſed by with ſilent pity, or viewed with ſcoffing inſolence.

The manner of Jeſus, ſtamped with the genuine impreſs of an energy more than human, the Evangeliſts have delineated with the greateſt ſimplicity, and without the leaſt ſhow of art.

In all the diſcourſes, which the Evangeliſts have attributed to Jeſus, there are evident traces of the dignity of the ſpeaker.* His auguſt and impreſſive mien, is

* A ſtriking inſtance of the impreſſive and authoritative manner of Jeſus, may be ſeen in his invective againſt the Phariſees, Matt. xxiii. The reader ſhould peruſe the whole chapter with attention. It ſhews the energy, the animation and the pathos which Jeſus could combine on proper occaſions.

In the viith and xth chapters of John, there are many delicate and lively traits of that peculiarly-impreſſive manner, which made the peaſant of Galilee, "who had not where to lay his head," appear as "one having authority." The laſt diſcourſes of Jeſus to his diſciples, detailed in John xiii. xiv. xv. xvi. are particularly deſerving of attention. They are very deſcriptive of the manner of Jeſus.—I particularly recommend what I have ſaid on this ſubject to the calm and candid conſideration of the author of the "Age of Reaſon" and his followers.

preſerved without much fulneſs of colouring, but with great delicacy of tint and preciſion of outline, in the four pourtraits of Jeſus, which have been drawn by the four Evangeliſts.

The ſame features are curiouſly kept, though in many different attitudes; and the same manner is obſerved, with inimitable ſkill, in a great diverſity of incidents and ſayings.

The manner of Jeſus muſt certainly have been noticed by the Jews, as an extraordinary trait in his character, and muſt have been regarded with ſome emotions of reverence, or they would not have ſaid of him, that "he ſpoke as one having authority." The Evangeliſts have, certainly, in their ſeveral hiſtories, marked, with ſingular nicety, the meekneſs, yet the energy, the earneſtneſs, the ſincerity, and the air of conſcious importance, which was obſerved in all that Jeſus uttered. Theſe combined qualities—the aſſociates of genuine authority, commanded the reſpect of the beholder; and excited ſenſations, which artificial greatneſs in vain ſtrives to emulate.

On this occaſion, in peruſing the Evangelical hiſtory, we cannot help being ſtruck with the apparent incongruity between the grandeur of the authoritative manner of Jeſus, and the meanneſs of his circumſtances.

Whence could the Galilean peaſant have devised the impreſſiveneſs of his manner? Whence could the ſaying of a poor, unfriended and houſeleſs wanderer, have commanded as much attention as if they had come from one who had the ſway of empires?

In the actual circumſtances of Jeſus (ſuppoſing him not to have poſſeſſed the divine powers which are aſcribed to him), it muſt have been difficult, indeed impoſſible, for him to have preſerved, in his whole deportment, in every word, in every geſture, all of which were expoſed to a ſevere and malicious ſcrutiny—the air of majeſty and the impreſſion of authority.

If Jeſus had been an impoſtor, and with no appendages of artificial grandeur, no recommendations of external power, his very aſſumption of the tones of authority, inſtead of exalting, muſt have degraded him

in the eyes of the people. Inſtead of commanding attention, he would have provoked laughter.

The multitude are led entirely by appearances; and they never aſſociate ideas of reſpect with the image of penury and of wretchedneſs.

The great, and ſeemingly irreconcileable, diſparity between the manner of Chriſt and his condition, would certainly have excited contempt and ridicule, rather than thoſe emotions of ſerioufneſs and awe, which genuine authority inſpires; if the meanneſs of his condition had not diſappeared in the real, not the affected dignity of his manner:

What he ſpoke commanded attention, becauſe it was ſpoken with genuine dignity; and becauſe the marks of a ſuperior energy were ſeen tranſlucent in Jeſus, through the veil of humiliating indigence. It was this that made even the moſt inveterate Jews, at times, liſten to him with ſilence and wonder. It was the manner of his ſayings and the air of authority, with which they were accompanied, that aſtoniſhed the Jews

as much as their ſhrewdneſs. "Igneus eſt illis vigor, et *cæleſtis origo.*"

When the Phariſees and the chief prieſts ſent officers to take Jeſus, theſe very officers, ſtruck with his manner, and with the dignified majeſty, which attended whatever fell from his lips, were awed into emotions of reverence. They, therefore, returned to their employers without executing their commiſſion: for "never," ſaid they—"did man ſpeak like this man." John vii. 46.

When a band of ſoldiers were ſent to ſeize Jeſus, in the garden of Gethſemane, John (xviii.) tells us, that Jeſus "went forth and ſaid unto them, whom ſeek ye?" "They anſwered him; Jeſus of Nazareth." "Jeſus ſaith unto them, *I am he.*" This ſimple but energetic declaration "*I am he,*" he ſeems to have made, "*as one having authority;*" and it marks the diſtinction between that authority which is genuine, and that which is aſſumed. For, the Evangeliſt ſays, that "when

Jeſus had ſaid unto them, *I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground.*"

A ſtronger or more natural inſtance of the influence of authority on the mind could not have been given. We ſee moral ſuſpending the action of phyſical power.

The unbeliever will tell me, that this incident is a mere fiction of the Evangeliſt. I will only ſay, that ſuppoſing it a fiction, the hiſtorian was more than an ingenious man, ſo well to adapt the incident to the character, and the character to the incident.

But I can, by no means, think that ſuch an incident would have been related, or even thought of, if it had not taken place. Was an hiſtorian ſo unlettered, and ſo little acquainted with the agency of metaphyſical properties, likely to imagine, that the ſimple enunciation of Jeſus, by the mere impalpable and ſpiritual force of authority, without a particle of phyſical power, ſhould make a band of diſciplined troops drop their arms and fall proſtrate on the earth.

This impreſſion is in perfect conſiſtency with the characteriſtic energy, which the four Eaangeliſts have with the moſt perfect harmony, appropriated to the manner of Jeſus; but it by no means leads to the concluſion that their relations are fabulous.

The manner of Jeſus, as it is delineated by the Evangeliſts, is uniformly the ſame;—impreſſive and authoritative through the whole recorded period of his miniſtry. Mean in his circumſtances, there are no meanneſſes, no littleneſſes in his manner. His ſerioufneſs never dwindles into jocoſeneſs; or contracts into churliſhneſs; his earneſtneſs is never forſaken for levity; and his ſincerity is too manifeſt, too palpable even, for a moment, to excite diſtruſt.

As he draws to the cloſing ſcene of his ſufferings, his manner ſo artleſsly pourtrayed, in the ſimple narrative of the Evangeliſts, rather increaſes than decreaſes in it's dignity; his laſt diſcourſes, are, if any thing, more impreſſive and authoritative than any, which he had before delivered.* What he ſet out with being,

* Conſult the Goſpel of St. John, vii. x. xiii. xiv. xv. xvi.

he continued to be; and in his character, as it is repreſented by the Evangeliſts, there is not a ſingle inconſiſtent or diſcordant trait, which can lead us to ſuſpect the truth of the hiſtorians, or the accuracy of the likeneſs.

A PICTURE OF
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

Remarks on the Chriſtian miracles.

IT is too common for man to make the diſplay of his power the only motive to it's exerciſe: but the Deity does not affect oſtentatious greatneſs; benevolence directs all his operations. The miracles of our Saviour, reſemble the agency of divine wiſdom, in the courſe of nature; they are not a vain and idle diſplay of power; they combine goodneſs with greatneſs, vaſtneſs of might with copiouſneſs of beneficence. *

* There are but two miracles recorded of our Saviour, which do not bear the palpable marks of benevolence; — the deſtruction of the ſwine and of the fig tree. That Jeſus ſhould mingle two miracles of deſtruction, with his numberleſs miracles of mercy, is not remarkable; if we conſider the uſeful inferences that are to be drawn from them. The mira-

Now, had the miraculous energies, which are aſcribed to Jeſus, exiſted only in the imagination of the hiſtorians, it is more than probable that the miracles, which they would have imputed to him, would have differed, materially, from thoſe which the Evangeliſts have recorded. Originating from the invention of man, they would have proved, like the ſpurious wonders of Pythagoras or of Apollonius Thyancus, their own refutation. Their inutility, their abſurdity or their oſtentation would have inevitably convicted them of falſhood.

When men give themſelves up to the invention of the marvellous, they ſoon ſtumble into extravagancies and inconſiſtencies. It is hardly poſſible for falſhood, ſo cloſely to counterfeit the language of truth, as ingeniouſly to aſſimilate the features of fraud to the countenance of honeſty, as not to leave the leaſt ſemblance of of deception.

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cle of the ſwine, ſhews us the importance of the guidance of the Divine Providence, in our way through life; without which our own paſſions, which are the moſt potent emiſſaries of Satan, will be our ruin; and will hurry us, as the fiends hurried the ſwine, into Deſtruction.

The miracle of the fig tree teaches us, that God expects us to be *prepared* to obey the ſummons to eternity, *in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon*,—in youth, manhood, and in age.

Suppoſing the Chriſtian miracles the fabrications of impoſture, it muſt be confeſſed, that the Evangeliſts have related a ſeries of lies, with all the artleſs ſimplicity, all the conſiſtency, all the apparent ingenuouſneſs, which we might expect in a narrative of facts, of which they were the eye-witneſſes; and which they could not have a ſingle motive to diſguiſe.

In the relation of the Chriſtian miracles, there is not a ſingle indication of the leaſt wiſh to guard againſt any objections that might be made to their authenticity. This ſhews the undaunted conſcioufneſs of truth. An impoſtor is uſually, tremblingly anxious to anticipate objections; of which he betrays the force by his eagerneſs to repel it. A certain buſy jealouſy of caution to corroborate truth, always excites ſuſpicion of falſhood.

No ſuſpicion of falſhood, can poſſibly ariſe in the mind of any candid enquirer, from the unreſerved, unguarded detail of the Chriſtian miracles. They are told as plain matters of fact, of which, not the leaſt doubt was entertained by the writers; and who, conſequently, took no pains to provide antidotes againſt the diſtruſt of their readers. Not haunted by the fears of impoſture,

they diſdained to notice objections which were groundleſs; or to anſwer cavils which were vain.

Truth relies on it's native, inherent vigor; while falſhood, which is allied to cowardice, fortifies itſelf againſt danger, by ſuperfluous precautions; it lengthens the line of it's defence, and expoſes it's impotence, by the buſy ſcrupuloſity of it's fears.

The miracles of Jeſus bear, on the very face of them, an evidence of their truth; they are aſſociated with no circumſtances which can excite the ſuſpicion of their being forgeries; and they are juſt ſuch miracles as we might ſuppoſe, from the moſt ſerious exerciſe of our natural reaſon, would have been performed, for the purpoſe of confirming any revelation, which the divine wiſdom might vouchſafe to mankind.

The Chriſtian miracles are ſupported by two kinds of evidence, one internal, the other external. The external evidence has been amply treated of by other writers, and I do not wiſh to make a book, by retailing arguments that frequent uſe has worn thread-bare; but I think, that the internal evidence has never yet been con-

ſidered with that attention which it deſerves, or with that nicety of diſcrimination of which it is ſuſceptible.

The ſtrength of the internal evidence would be more clearly ſhown, if any, the moſt ingenious infidel would attempt to write the fictitious life of a perſon, ſaid to have been ſent from heaven, on purpoſe to promulgate a new religion, and to reveal the moſt glorious and uſeful truths. Let the writer of this hiſtory, which I am ſuppoſing, for the ſake of argument, make the ſubject of his narrative perform a variety of miracles; and let him try whether, with the utmoſt labour, he could make them, in all reſpects, in their characteriſtic features, in their minute and incidental circumſtances, half ſo natural or ſo apparently real as thoſe recorded in the goſpel. Without any temerity of conjecture we might, I think, beforehand determine, that he, who ſhould make this attempt, would not be able to produce a hiſtory, which (without regarding it's proof from teſtimony, from the circumſtances of the times, or the records of contemporary hiſtory,) would wear thoſe artleſs and unvarniſhed features of genuineneſs, honeſty and veracity, which are ſeen in every page of the memoirs which the Evangeliſts have left us of Jeſus Chriſt.

There will always be, from the very ſtructure of the human mind, certain nice and peculiar diſtinctions between forged and real hiſtory; which the writer of the former will overlook or will be unable to catch; but which will, at leaſt, prevent his work from impoſing on the generality of mankind.

In fabulous memoirs, either ſome relations will claſh with ſome genuine circumſtances of contemporary hiſtory, with ſome manners or uſages of the ſame place, at the ſame period, or the writer will dwell ſo much on generalities, as to prove that he could not have been a contemporary of the times or the perſons he deſcribes, or an eye-witneſs of the facts he records; or elſe he will expatiate ſo long and largely on particulars—not diſtinct, appropriate, lively and intereſting—but cold, ſuperfluous, inappoſite, incoherent—as evidently to betray an attempt to impoſe.

Nothing of this kind appears in the accounts of the Evangeliſts.—The hiſtorians of truth,—they have ſurmounted thoſe difficulties, on which the hiſtorians of forgery would have ſtumbled; they have been betrayed into no inconſiſtencies, either in relation to former parts

of their own narrative, or to the manners, cuſtoms and laws of the country, where the facts occurred, or to the circumſtances of contemporary hiſtory; they have related occurrences in that unaffected, undiſguiſed manner, without too many or too few ſpecialities, as eye-witneſſes of the facts, and plain and honeſt hiſtorians naturally would do.—They ſhew no deſire to compreſs and curtail, or to dilate and embelliſh; every thing they relate is told in a moſt lively, natural and inartificial manner;—the narrative of the miracles, they atteſt, if it be generally brief, is always circumſtantial; and when copious, it never tires by tedioufneſs of digreſſion or dryneſs of detail. It's energy is not weakened by it's conciſeneſs; and it's ſpirit is never evaporated in diffuſeneſs.

A PICTURE OF
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

Remarks on the miracle of the blind man reſtored to ſight by Jeſus; according to the account given by St. John ix.

I SHALL now proceed to corroborate and to exemplify ſeveral remarks, which have been made in the preceding pages, in a critical and circumſtantial examination of the miracle of the reſtoration of a blind man to ſight; which is related by St. John ix.

To this miracle, I humbly ſolicit the attention of thoſe, who are diſpoſed to imagine that there is no more credit due to the Chriſtian miracles, than to the wildeſt fictions.

The miracle, I have ſelected for the ſubject of theſe obſervations, is related more in detail than any of the reſt. It bears, at firſt ſight, evident ſigns of it's authenticity; and which will be more apparent, if we contraſt it with the moſt ſpecious wonders of pagan hiſtory, or of popiſh artifice. It glows warm with the colouring of life and nature; and ſhows none of the awkward or incoherent combinations of a forgery. But let us proceed to the account of the miracle itſelf.—

"As Jeſus paſſed by, he ſaw a man who was blind from his birth. And his diſciples aſked him, ſaying; Maſter, who did ſin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

In this introduction, there is no trace of conſtraint or artifice. The relation opens with the moſt unaffected eaſe and air of ſincerity. The firſt incident does not ſeem to have been feigned, to introduce what follows; and yet it does not inappoſitely coaleſce with it.

To the queſtion of his diſciples, the Evangeliſt relates that Jeſus anſwered, "Neither hath this man ſinned nor his parents; but that the works of God ſhould be

made manifeſt in him. *I muſt work the works of him that ſent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work.* AS LONG AS I AM IN THE WORLD, I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD." Obſerve, in this reply, that characteriſtic confidence and energy, which marks almoſt all the ſayings which the Evangeliſts have recorded of Jeſus. The peculiarity of his manner, the diſcriminating air of his addreſs is delineated, not with a coarſe, but delicate hand, in the words which are printed in Italics and capitals.

It was uſual with Jeſus, to drop, as it were, incidentally, and to incorporate with apparently-extraneous matter, the moſt weighty ſentences;—ſentences which were uttered with impreſſive dignity; and which awaken the mind to the moſt ſerious reflections. "*The night cometh when no man can work!*" How much meaning, how much ſalutary and awful admonition is folded up in this laſt ſentence!—"AS LONG AS I AM IN THE WORLD, I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD." Theſe words are another remarkable inſtance of Chriſt's manner, ſententious and dignified. They bear the character of majeſty, and ſhow the unappalled conſciouſneſs of more than mortal dignity.

" When he had thus ſpoken, he ſpat on the ground and made clay of the ſpittle; and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And he ſaid unto him; go, waſh in the pool of Siloam. He went his way therefore and waſhed, and came ſeeing."

This, by no means, looks like the act of an impoſtor; for ſuch an one uſually affects more myſtery; and, at leaſt, keeps his noſtrums a ſecret. Jeſus, certainly, could by his ſimple volition have effected the cure; but he ſeems to have reſorted to this ſecondary means the more eminently to diſplay his power.

The power of God is never more glorioufly manifeſted, that when he produces great ends by feeble inſtruments. In the miracle which we are conſidering, common ſenſe muſt have told the ſpectators, that the mixture of ſpittle with dirt, could not have reſtored ſight to one born blind. But ſo ſimple and inſignificant an application only ſerved to ſhew, more forcibly, the divine energy that animated the phyſician.

Had this miracle not been genuine and real, but one which exiſted only in the imagination of the writer,

who was desirous of imposing it on the credulity of the world, it seems probable, that he would have made the hero of his tale adopt a more complicated and mysterious mode of cure; and, at the same time, affect a greater degree of skill. It is likewise probable that the narrator, after having told us that the blind man "went and washed and came seeing," would have indulged himself in some expressions of panegyric, * on the wisdom or the benevolence of Jesus; but instead of this the Evangelist details a long conversation, which took place on the subject of the cure; and, at which, he seems to have been himself present. His account of it is so vivid, and the transitions in the dialogue so abrupt, and yet natural; as they usually are, on subjects which provoke minuteness of examination, and excite the impatience of contradiction. This will be visible even through the medium of a translation. †

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* One strong proof of the truth of the gospel history is, that there is not a single line in it, which breathes even a whisper of adulation. — All is plain, unadorned narrative; facts occupy the place of eulogies.

† There are very few persons, who, though they may write other languages can think in any but their own. Much as they may endeavour, they can hardly help tinging a foreign language with the peculiarities of their vernacular tongue.

" The neighbours, therefore, and they which before had ſeen him that he was blind, ſaid; Is not this he that

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The Greek of the Evangeliſts, is tiſſued with Hebraiſms; though they wrote in the firſt language, they thought in the laſt. — This, by the by, is an argument againſt thoſe, who pretend that the goſpels were written under the immediate and plenary influence of inſpiration; — for, had the thoughts been inſpired; the language, in which thoſe thoughts are conveyed, muſt have been inſpired likewiſe; for very few ideas (thoſe alone excepted which repreſent ſenſible objects) can be communicated to the mind of another, but through the medium of words.

It may be ſaid that the Almighty could convey to the mind of man even the moſt abſtract notions, without the intermediate uſe of their ordinary ſigns.

It is certainly wrong to limit the power of God; but it is equally wrong to multiply miracles without neceſſity. This is to criminate his wiſdom, and, in fact, to queſtion his power, which is always the practical influence of his wiſdom.

But it may be ſaid, that the divine communications were imparted to the Evangeliſts through the medium of language; but that this language was not the Greek but the Hebrew. — To this, we muſt reply, that Providence always takes the ſhorteſt method to accompliſh his deſigns; and that it is therefore more natural to ſuppoſe, that had the hiſtory of the Evangeliſts been written under the plenary energy of immediate inſpiration, the narrative would have been tranſmitted to their minds, through the medium of the language *in which it was to be written*; that the hiſtorian might not be under the neceſſity of tranſlating into corrupt Greek, what was inſpired in pure Hebrew. If inſpiration were neceſſary to the Evangeliſts, it was as neceſſary that the language they wrote in ſhould be inſpired, as well as the thoughts; in order to prevent thoſe inaccuracies, which would otherwiſe neceſſarily occur, in tranſlating thoughts out of a vernacular into a foreign idiom.

ſat and begged? Some ſaid; This is him: others ſaid; He is like him: but he ſaid; I am he!"

There ſeems, to me, to be no occaſion whatever for ſuppoſing, that the hiſtorical parts either of the Old or New Teſtament were indited under a divine and uncontroulable influence.

Had the Evangeliſts ſuch ſhort memories, that they could not ſpeak truth without the aid of inſpiration? Were they not competent to give a faithful narrative of tranſactions, which had paſſed either before their own eyes or the eyes of their contemporaries? Like honeſt hiſtorians, could they not conſcientiouſly relate what they had ſeen and heard? We pay them a poor compliment by the contrary ſuppoſition.—There are, certainly, ſome few variations in the memoirs of the Evangeliſts, which, though they *rather confirm than invalidate their authority, conſidering them as mere human compoſitions*, are yet totally irreconcileable with the belief of *their full and unconditional inſpiration.*

The univerſal and unconditional inſpiration of the Scriptures cannot be maintained; but the inſpiration of the prophetic parts, particularly of thoſe which relate to the coming of the Meſſiah, and the diſperſion of the Jews, is capable of demonſtrative proof. At this poſt let us make our ſtand againſt all aſſailants.

Whether the narrative of the Evangeliſts be inſpired or not, it cannot be doubted by any, who are acquainted with both Greek and Hebrew, or who have peruſed the learned volumes of Michaelis, that the Greek of the Evangeliſts is caſt in the mould of the Hebrew idiom. Hence ariſes the difficulty of affixing a preciſe and definite meaning to many paſſages in the ſacred volume; and hence we ought, in many caſes, where the native ſimplicity of the Greek is diſguiſed under the veil of Eaſtern metaphor, to allow ſome latitude of interpretation; and, not always, to limit the ſenſe, within the ſtrict and literal acceptation of the words. I am, by no means, for affixing a myſtical conſtruction *to any paſſages* in Scripture; but ſuch an one as ſhould occaſionally modify, reſtrain or amplify the literal ſenſe, ſo *as to ſuit the Eaſtern idiom,—in which the writers thought, and in which their meaning, wherever it is dubious, muſt, of courſe, be ſought.*

How natural is all this! It has the animation of life, and the ſimplicity of truth. The curioſity of the ſpectators was a good deal excited by the miracle, which had been performed; but yet it was ſo extraordinary an one, that their minds fluctuated, as might have been expected, between conviction and diſtruſt. "Some ſaid, This is he; others ſaid, This is like him;" but the poor man, as if jealous of the reputation of the miracle, and proud of the privilege of ſight, exclaims—"*I am he.*"

"Therefore, ſaid they unto him; how were thine eyes opened?" To this queſtion he anſwers, "A man that is called Jeſus, made clay and anointed mine eyes; and ſaid unto me; Go to the pool of Siloam and waſh; and I went and waſhed, and I received ſight. Then ſaid they unto him; Where is he?" (This queſtion ſhews the emotion of impatient curioſity, turning from the object to the author of the miracle.) "He ſaid, I know not."

The perſon who had been blind was now brought before the Phariſees. We are firſt told that it was the Sabbath day, when Jeſus made the clay and opened his

eyes. "Then again the Phariſees alſo aſked him, how he had received his ſight. He ſaid unto them; He put clay upon mine eyes; and I waſhed and do ſee. Then they called the parents of him that had received his ſight."

A modern Skeptic could hardly have queſtioned the validity of any miracle more acutely than the Phariſees did, on this occaſion; and in the true ſpirit of ſome modern unbelievers, when they could not invalidate the fact, they ſought for a confutation in obloquy and paſſion.

"Is this your ſon, whom ye ſay was born blind? how then doth he now ſee?" The Phariſees, perhaps, expected that the parents of the poor man, intimidated at the ſternneſs of their manner, would either confeſs their ignorance of the matter, or would give ſuch anſwers to their queſtions, as ſhould gratify their wiſhes, by ſhaking the credibility of the fact. The anſwer, however, which the parents returned, though cautious, was by no means evaſive.

"We know," ſaid they, "that this is our ſon, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now

ſeeth we know not; he is of age; aſk him; he ſhall ſpeak for himſelf." The Evangeliſt here ſpeaks with all the particularity of an eye-witneſs, in the ſcene he deſcribes; and how little does what he has here ſaid favour of a forgery!

The Phariſees, baffled in their purpoſe, and hardly knowing how to get rid of the impreſſion, which the miracle had made, again called for the perſon who had received his ſight; and ſaid unto him; "Give God the praiſe; we know that this man is a ſinner." Obſerve the art of the Phariſees; unable to diſprove the fact they endeavour to ſet aſide the inferrence, and to ſilence the voice of truth by dogmatical aſſertion. "WE KNOW *that this man is a ſinner.*"

How natural is the reply to this ſpeech! ſuch as the event certainly prompted; but ſuch, as if the miracle had been a fiction of fancy, was by no means, likely to have been invented. "He anſwered and ſaid; Whether he be a ſinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I ſee." He does not, till he is further provoked, *openly deny* the aſſertion of the Phariſees, that Jeſus was a ſinner; but he artfully,

though ſilently, refutes it, by referring them to the miracle.

The Phariſees, who ſeem to have been incenſed by the poor man's anſwer, proceed to bluſter and to brow-beat him, as ſome counſellors do a witneſs, whom they want to make to deny or recant the truth. They ſay unto him, in the ſhort and abrupt interrogatories of paſſion; "How did he to thee? How opened he thine eyes?"

Here the Evangeliſt, in a meaſure, makes us ſpectators in the ſcene; and delineates, in a very characteriſtic manner, the impatience and the fury of the Phariſees.

The poor man, ſtimulated by the vehemence of his adverſaries, grows, in his turn, warmer in his manner; and anſwers their ſcoffs by a dry but very ſarcaſtic inſinuation. "I have told you," ſaid he, "already and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? *Will ye alſo be his diſciples?*"

"Then they reviled him and ſaid; Thou art his diſciple; but we are Moſes's diſciples. We know

that God ſpake unto Moſes; as for this fellow, we know not whence he is."

The poor man, now, inſtigated by repeated contradiction, and warmed with emotions of gratitude towards his benefactor, proceeds to defend him againſt the contemptuous language of his accuſers. He ſays; "Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not ſinners; but, if any man be a worſhiper of God, him he heareth. Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

The rage of the Phariſees could no longer be reſtrained; they ſaid unto him; "Thou waſt altogether born in ſins, and doſt thou teach us? And they caſt him out."

Had this miracle been a mere fiction of the hiſtorian; we cannot well ſuppoſe that he would have inſerted the ſubſequent dialogue, which is a curious and ſhrewd inveſtigation of the fact, by the ſpirit of ſkepticiſm; and

which has not the leaſt appearance of an ideal fabrication; but which, as far as internal evidence can go, proves the reality of the miracle, which it conteſts. In the courſe of the dialogue, the gradations of paſſion are marked with great vivacity, in the quickneſs of the tranſitions, and the abruptneſs of the diſpute; and the whole, inſtead of being the combination of ingenious artifice, ſeems the eaſy, natural and unaffected relation of one, who had ſeen and heard all that he relates.

In the poor ſufferer, who had received his ſight, we behold reiterated obloquy rouſing timidity into boldneſs; and animating truth from an indirect and trembling confeſſion, into an open and manly avowal;—in the Phariſees, we ſee cunning, mortified into rage; and baffled falſhood, ending in angry violence. "They caſt him out."

The narrative of falſe miracles is commonly it's own confutation; and, if this miracle be a fictitious one, we muſt allow that the unlettered Evangeliſt excelled in the delicate refinements of fraud; and that he poſſeſſed the ſingular talent of habiting the guilt of fraudulent impoſture—not in ſpecious or wanton ornaments—but in the

more winning, becauſe genuine, attire of ſimplicity and truth. *

Would to God! that any thing which I have ſaid on this miracle, could impreſs any one with ſuch a conviction of it's reality, as that it might remove the film of infidelity from his intellectual ſight, and pour into it the light of immortality!

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* The account of the miracle, does not conclude with the altercation between the perſon who had received his ſight and the Phariſees. The Evangeliſt proceeds to relate it's moral influence on him on whom it had been wrought. Jeſus having heard of his treatment by the Phariſees, ſaid unto him—"Doſt thou believe on the Son of God?"—"And he ſaid, Lord, I believe. And he worſhiped him. And Jeſus ſaid, for judgment I am come into this world; that they which ſee not might ſee, and that they which ſee might be made blind." Obſerve the authoritative manner of Jeſus.

A PICTURE OF
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

The character of Jeſus illuſtrated.

THE character of individuals may be uſually identified with the influence of early impreſſions. Thoſe impreſſions, made at a time when the ſuſceptibility of excitement is the greateſt, and when the ſenſations poſſeſs a peculiar vivacity, commonly conſtitute the baſis of character. They communicate to the mind and the affections their diſcriminating features. In infancy, how frequently do we imbibe the ſeeds of thoſe ſympathies, which, inviſibly, influence the happineſs or the miſery of our future lives !!! *

* That peculiar bent of mind, which diſcriminates individuals through life, and which, when it diſplays itſelf, with a predominating

From the circumſtances, in which Jeſus appears to have been placed in early life, we might ſuppoſe, that a

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vigor, in any branch of art or ſcience, is commonly called Genius, is probably derived from early ſympathies; and which often take place ſo early that it is impoſſible to trace them to their original ſource. Sir Joſhua Reynolds, as we are informed by Johnſon, in his life of Cowley, imbibed the firſt fondneſs for his favourite art, from the peruſal of Richardſon's treatiſe on painting.

Chatterton, probably derived his partiality for antiquities, from having been taught his letters from ſome illumined leaves of an old miſſal.

The ſtrange antipathies, hallucinations, or falſe and prepoſterous combinations of ideas, which we may frequently obſerve among our fellow-creatures, ſeem likewiſe, for the moſt part, to be the reſult of early aſſociation. When ſenſations of a very lively nature have once been felt in the ſenſorium, their influence is likely to remain; and reaſon often in vain attempts to abate it. In this caſe, reaſon is uſually found a feeble adverſary to ſenſation. In childhood, the power of ſenſation is ſtronger than that of reaſon; but as reaſon gradually unfolds it's energies, the power of ſenſation becomes leſs, that of reaſon greater; — except in thoſe particular inſtances, in which ſenſation, aided by the adventitious force of ſome extraordinary, incidental impreſſions, gains an aſcendant over the reaſon; from which the latter can never, afterwards, accompliſh it's deliverance. Thus, when young people have been frightened, through the folly of their mothers or their nurſes, by the terriffic tales of apparitions, and have, by this means, had the ſenſation of fear powerfully excited, they can ſeldom, as they grow up, entirely break the ſpell of theſe terrible illuſions.—The ſenſation of terror, ſtrong and over-bearing, palſies the exertions of the reaſon; and produces, under particular circumſtances, a deplorable ſtate of mental imbecility; which precludes the power of counteracting the hallucinations of the fancy, by the energy of intellect. How does fancy make fools of us all!! Even the aſpiring genius of philoſophy has been ſometimes cruſhed into cowardice by it's vain and illuſory ſhadows!

very different character would have been formed, from that repreſented by the Evangeliſts. The parents of

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We are liable to be ruled by the influence of incidents or impreſſions, which we have forgotten; or, in other words, ſenſations are ſubject to revival by aſſociation, when the cauſes which firſt produced them are remembered no longer. Who then can calculate the power of incidental impreſſions? and how ſtudious ought thoſe, who have the care of children, to be, that no impreſſions be made on their minds, which, as the very ſagacious author of Zoonomia has obſerved, may bias their affections or miſlead their judgments to the ends of their lives. See Zoonom. ii. 386. Education, as far as it reſpects the formation of habits, cannot be begun too early.—Habits which beget peeviſh and unſocial tempers, and which tend to moral depravity, by being aſſociated with malevolence, are probably often formed, by the miſmanagement of mothers and nurſes, in the firſt period of childhood. At that period, the faculty of aſſociation is moſt alive and vigorous; and which, according to it's peculiar determination, uſually influences the temper and the character of man to the laſt of his days.

How many uſeful leſſons might the preceptors of youth learn from meditating deeply on the power and influence of early aſſociations!—How ſubſervient might they render them to the cauſe of ſcience and of benevolence!—The evil effects of early impreſſions are readily ſeen; but a wiſe ſyſtem of education would counteract the bad and promote the good. We ſhould be particularly ſolicitous to engraft into the heart, while it is yet incorrupt and innocent, habits of benevolence; and which might readily be effected, by taking advantage of little incidents and caſual occurrences, to connect the practice of benevolence with the vivacity of pleaſurable ſenſation; and which would be ſubject to revival by aſſociation, when the incidents, which firſt excited it, were forgotten. Were pleaſurable feelings connected with the idea of benevolence, at a very early period, and before the love of ſenſual or ſelfiſh pleaſure had made any very deep impreſſion on the heart, ſo as to counteract the growth of the amia-

Jeſus were poor, and lived in obſcurity; gaining their livelihood by their humble induſtry. They therefore

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ſympathies, *the affections would* receive *a forceable and originally-virtuous biaſs; which the future intercourſe with, or experience of the ordinary ſelfiſhneſs of mankind might modify, but would never deſtroy.*

The reader will excuſe me, if I add another remark to this long note; of which, I hope the length will be excuſed, from it's relation to a moſt important, nay, *the* moſt important topic of human enquiry;—The formation of the mind to ſcience and to virtue.——I will add, then, careleſs of the cenſure, which the obſervation may bring upon me, from the trifling and the licentious, that if we wiſh to encourage the free expanſion of the benevolent principle in children, ws ought never to put a card into their hands.—Young people are brought up, with the notion that card-playing is a pretty, innocent recreation. They, therefore, at a very early period, learn to aſſociate the idea of gaming with many ideas of pleaſure; and not, as they ought, with ſenſations of ſhame, of pain and diſappointment.—I hardly know any admonition which a parent ought more aſſiduouſly to inſtil into his child than this,—that all gaming is a ſpecies of robbery by deluſion, that it engenders fraud and ends in miſery. Even the leſs ſpecies of gaming, which are deemed ſo perfectly harmleſs, and ſo nicely adapted to fill up the yawning vacancies of fatuity,—even theſe lead directly to a fatal depravation of the moral principle, by extinguiſhing the benevolent affections.—I never knew a confirmed and habitual card-player, who had not a callous and unfeeling heart. It is indeed impoſſible for any one long to retain the general glow of one benevolent ſympathy, who habitually aſſociates, like the inveterate card-player, ſenſations of triumph and of pleaſure, with the vexation and diſappointment of others. Even the leaſt and moſt innocuous ſpecies of gaming have a fatal tendency to imbue, with the taſte of pleaſure, the emotions of malevolence; and, indeed, we cannot long be partakers in a ſingle amuſement, into which one drop of the ſpirit of gaming has been infuſed, without it's diminiſhing the power of that ſuſceptibility of catch-

could not afford to give him what among the Jews was called a learned education. He was, probably, brought up to the profeſſion of his father; and, ſuppoſing him no more than an ordinary mortal, the only means he had of acquiring that knowledge, which was requiſite to empower him to ſubvert the religious inſtitutions of his own country, and of the world, and to become the founder of a new and ſpiritual worſhip, of a houſe of prayer for all nations, were, by attending the ſynagogue, and the ſolemn feaſts at Jeruſalem.

The whole literature of the Jews conſiſted of one book—the Law and the Prophets, with the comments and traditions of the Scribes and Phariſees. Theſe were

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ing the ſenſations of others, and of mingling them with our own; from which ſympathy flows, and by which benevolence is excited.—Muſt not then the higher and more criminal ſpecies of gaming tend, with a direct and accelerated influence, to chill the benevolence of the heart, and to ſear the ſenſe of integrity of conduct? Does not the ſpirit of gaming, rankling in the heart, and gradually, but rapidly, undermining all within, infallibly create the cruel and deſigning villain? Does he not ſoon learn to plunder the unwary without ſhame, and even to triumph in proportion to the miſery and indigence he produces? Hear this! ye heroes and heroines of Faro. Would to God, it could raiſe one bluſh on your livid cheeks, or one emotion of remorſe in your callous hearts!!!

the only ſources of wiſdom, to which he could have acceſs; but from theſe, had Jeſus not been under a divine influence, imparting wiſdom from above, he muſt have been debarred by ignorance. For we gather from John vii. 15, 16. that he had received no literary inſtruction whatever. "How (ſaid the Jews) knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" What learning he poſſeſſed was not an artificial acquiſition. "My doctrine (ſaid Jeſus, in reply to the objection of the Jews,) is not mine, but his that ſent me."

A child uſually imbibes, at leaſt, ſome portion of the prejudices of his parents, and of thoſe among whom he is educated. The univerſal prejudices of the jews, at the time of the nativity of Jeſus, are well known. Among theſe prejudices, one of the moſt predominant, was the expectation of a triumphant Meſſiah, a conceited opinion of their own, and a ſupercilious diſdain of all other nations. Theſe prejudices, inſtilled by his parents and acquaintance, would have flowed ſoftly and almoſt inſenſibly into the boſom of Jeſus. And, had he been only an impoſtor, it is more than probable that he would himſelf have been the dupe of thoſe early prepoſ-

feſſions;* and certainly he would not have taken ſo direct a ſtep to defeat his own views, by oppoſing the

* When men are prejudiced againſt truth, no proofs, even amounting to demonſtration, are ſufficient to convince them of it. Blinded by the prepoſſeſſions of error, they ſee every argument that is advanced through a falſe medium. The Phariſees, though they would gladly have received the Meſſiah, if he had appeared in the form and manner, in which their prejudices had anticipated his coming; yet, notwithſtanding all the miraculous proofs of his divine miſſion, they turned from him with abhorrence and diſguſt, when they found that his appearance and his circumſtances did not agree with their former darling expectations.

If we enter on the inveſtigation of any two opinions, with the leaſt bias on either ſide, or with any partial wiſhes that the one may be falſe, the other true, we are almoſt ſure, and without knowing it, to be led into error. We give too much weight to the arguments on one ſide, too little to thoſe on the other. Thus it has often happened, that the ſuppoſed truths of philoſophers, have been no better than the abortion of infant prejudices. We muſt continue to be led aſtray by prepoſſeſſions, while, inſtead of ſeeking truth, for truth's ſake, we ſet up an idol of our own vanity in it's place; and endeavour to adjuſt the ſtandard of truth to the ever-varying beam of our affections.

All truth is of importance; but religious truth is moſt important; as the greateſt happineſs is connected with it.—The firſt impreſſions of religious truth are commonly made in childhood. If theſe impreſſions happen to be falſe or pernicious, they can ſeldom be removed, to make way for more ſalutary notions.—If we ſit down at an advanced period of life, to make up our minds on religious matters, and to adopt that mode of faith and worſhip which ſhall appear moſt agreeable to Scripture, ſcrutinized by candour and interpreted by reaſon, it is ten to one, but we are miſled by the imperceptible and treacherous influence of paſt aſſociations. Thus, religious opinions, even thoſe which may be ſaid to be formed by mature conſideration, are ſeldom untinctured with the prejudices of in-

favourite, the long and univerſally received notions of his countrymen. Had he aſpired from ambitious or from perſonal views to counterfeit the Meſſiah, he would not have attempted to extirpate the prejudices of a whole people, but to turn them to account; he would have taken advantage of every circumſtance, to maintain the character he aſſumed; and to make the popular opinion ſubſervient to his temporal aggrandizement.

But, in the very commencement of his miniſtry, Jeſus directly combated the bigoted attachments, the

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fancy.—This ought to teach us to treat the opinions of others without aſperity, to advance our own with modeſty, and to defend them without bigotry. Of the many modes of faith, which exiſt among Chriſtians, one only can be right; and it is arrogance and impiety in any man to ſay that his is *that one*; and that, conſequently, all others are erroneous. In matters of religious opinion, no man is raſhly to condemn his brother; for no man can advance beyond probability in the proof that his way is the right. But though I would encourage, in individuals, charity, forbearance, and mildneſs in judging of the religious tenets of others; yet I would, by no means, recommend a cold, languid and lifeleſs indifference with reſpect to the complexion of their own. On the contrary, I earneſtly exhort every one to embrace with warmth, but without acrimony,—with ſteadineſs, but without perverſeneſs, that mode of faith and worſhip which, from the beſt and moſt unprejudiced enquiry he can make, he conſcientiouſly believes the right; and then he may ſecurely rely that God will pardon him, if he be in the wrong. A juſt and merciful judge will, we may be convinced, never puniſh the adoption of opinions that were falſe, when it was honeſtly ſuppoſed that they were *true*.

darling prepoſſeſſions of every Jew; and boldly oppoſed his ſingle and feeble arm, to ſtem the current of thoſe popular notions, which, at that time, rolled with a fierce impetuoſity through the whole extent of Paleſtine; and of which, he, himſelf, had he been no more than man, could hardly have ſuſtained the overwhelming force. What individual can reſiſt the powerful influence of general ſympathy?

When, therefore, Jeſus ſet up for the propagator of a new religion, he muſt either have unlearned the prejudices, and totally eraſed the impreſſions of his early years; which, on the ſuppoſition of his mortality, is highly improbable; or we muſt allow that he was exempted by the peculiar bleſſing of the divine influence, from the force of thoſe primary aſſociations, which, according to the uſual laws of action, affect the character and the conduct to the cloſe of life.

Let us now look a little nearer into the character of Jeſus, and inveſtigate ſome of it's peculiar and diſcriminating excellencies.

In Jeſus, we behold none of thoſe ſhowy and noiſy virtues, which dazzle vulgar eyes, and attract vulgar

praiſe. In his character, there are none of thoſe ornamental features, which are more ſubſervient to ambition than to utility. There is neither in his actions nor his ſentiments the leaſt of parade. There is no faſcinating ſplendour, to cheat the judgment into admiration. There is every thing truly great, without the leaſt ſhow of greatneſs. It is a character totally diſtinct from that proud and fiery impetuoſity, which often paſſes for magnanimity; from that ſullen apathy, which is ſometimes miſtaken for grandeur; from that undiſtinguiſhing and viſionary zeal, which is the mimic of devotion; and from that affectation of purity, which uſurps the name of holineſs.

It is a character which is inimitable; while it ſeems rather below than above the level of human imitation. The paſſive virtues are it's moſt conſpicuous features; and theſe, however they may be depreciated by common minds, or however eaſy of attainment they may be accounted, are, in truth, more difficult to be acquired, and more productive of happineſs, than the energies of a buſy and a turbulent diſpoſition.

But, if the character of Jeſus be diſcriminated by the lovelieſt features of gentleneſs, meekneſs and forbear-

ance, patience, humility and reſignation; ſtill it is marked with more energetic qualities; by a benevolence, which is ever awake to the touch of ſympathy, which is ever vigorouſly employed in diſſipating miſery. If he be adorned by a mildneſs that reſents no inſult and retaliates no injury, he, at the ſame time, diſplays a ſpirit ardent in oppoſing error and combating wickedneſs.

Jeſus begins his celebrated ſermon on the mount, by beſtowing the tribute of eternal bleſſedneſs on thoſe unoſtentatious qualities, and retired graces, which leaſt excite the envy or the admiration of the world. It is obſervable, that he commends thoſe affections and virtues moſt, by which he was himſelf moſt eminently diſtinguiſhed. He was always the pattern of his own leſſons. He taught what he practiced; and he practiced what he taught. He was poor in ſpirit; he was meek, merciful and pure in heart.

The more we examine the blameleſſneſs of his life, and the ſpirit of his doctrine, the more we ſhall be convinced that, Jeſus was thoroughly acquainted with the mind and affections; and with the efficient cauſes of human happineſs or miſery. He knew that the great

ſum of the afflictions of life was occaſioned by turbulence, vindictiveneſs and malignity of diſpoſition. Hence all public and private ſtriſe; the ſeeds of animoſity between individuals and nations. On this account, Jeſus laid ſo much ſtreſs upon the paſſive virtues—on the ſilent kindneſs of the heart. Were meekneſs, gentleneſs and forbearance univerſal, the ſword might reſt in it's ſcabbard—every kingdom and every houſe would be a temple of peace.

The fiery ſpirit of revenge is moſt predominant, in that ſtate of human nature, which is fartheſt removed from the knowledge of the Deity and from religious purity. The nearer approaches which man makes to the divine perfections, the more will this ſavage paſſion be abated. But though revenge be a paſſion utterly irreconcileable with the ſpirit of pure religion, ſtill the complete ſuppreſſion of it, is utterly impoſſible to man without the divine aſſiſtance. For man, being made, exquiſitely ſenſible to pleaſure and to pain, has naturally a deſire for the firſt, and an averſion for the laſt. Hence, he cannot help aſſociating ſome idea of malevolence with the image of thoſe, who wilfully inflict painful ſenſations. The paſſion of hate begins, however faintly, to ferment

the moment an injury is felt; and, even in the gentleſt of human boſoms, there is ſome tranſient interval of paſſion, before the religious ſentiments or benevolent ſympathies can check the angry efferveſcence.

Every phyſical ſenſation of pain, is accompanied with a wiſh to remove it; and where is it ſo natural to wiſh to remove it, as to the cauſe which occaſioned it? —Hence the deſire of reverberating pain and retaliating injuries. A revenge of this kind, which is rather of a phyſical than of a moral nature, would ceaſe with the ſenſations that produced it. But revenge, we know, often rankles in the heart, long after the cauſe which firſt excited it has ceaſed to exert any painful influence. The ſentiment of reſentment is cheriſhed by malignant reflections, when it's firſt efferveſcence has ſubſided; and is combined with many aſſociated ideas of honour or of pleaſure, till cruelty almoſt becomes a paſtime.

How much might we diminiſh the ſum of human miſery, if we could, in ſome meaſure, reverſe the common order of human ſympathies, and teach children univerſally to aſſociate the idea of honour with forbearance, and of pleaſure with forgiveneſs!!! How much

rancour and bloodſhed might, by this means, be prevented!!! The happineſs of individuals, is, I am inclined to believe, always in a direct ratio with their benevolent ſympathies;—the happineſs of mankind, conſidered in the aggregate, evidently is.

Of all the perſons recorded in hiſtory, Jeſus ſeems the only one who ever obtained a complete triumph over the paſſion of reſentment; and, in whoſe boſom, it was totally abſorbed in the oppoſite paſſion of love. This love, he demonſtrated by an uniform meekneſs and forbearance; by the happineſs he diffuſed while he lived and when he died. He endured with patience, and without the leaſt acrimony, perſecution, ſcorn and inſult; he never returned railing for railing; but, contrarywiſe, bleſſing. He exhibited that poorneſs of ſpirit, which is the higheſt degree of magnanimity; in as much as a victory over the angry paſſions, and the indignant feelings that rage for vent in the boſom, is the moſt difficult and moſt glorious of atchievements. The conqueror of Darius and of Perſia was ruled, like a weak woman, by the guſt of his reſentments. But he, who triumphed over the croſs, was ſignalized by a greater atchievement than the ſubjugation of kings, or

the ſubverſion of empires;—by the maſtery of himſelf! He never performed any action, that, in the leaſt, indicated reſentment; he never uttered a word of anger or a taunt of bitterneſs.

Such was the meekneſs and forbearance of him, who is, by a beautiful emblem of innocence, called—the Lamb of God. Of this temper and carriage he ſet us the example; becauſe he knew that it would moſt effectually promote our happineſs here; and fit us for an intercourſe with the bleſſed ſpirits hereafter; who dwell in the manſions of peace, where turbulence and malignity can never enter.

Jeſus laid the utmoſt ſtreſs, in moſt of his diſcourſes, on the importance of the placid and the benevolent affections; and, probably, from their being the eſſential characteriſtics of that ſtate of future happineſs, to which the good Chriſtian hopes for a paſſage through the grave. It is the opinion of the immortal Hartley, that the aſſociations or ſympathies, we contract on earth, will accompany us into a future ſtate. If this be true, and it is certainly no unſcriptural doctrine, but apparently confirmed by the general *tendency* of the diſcourſes of

Jeſus, of what vaſt conſequence is it to us, to cheriſh the benevolent ſympathies, and to indulge all the kind affections!!! How ſtudiouſly ought parents to labour, to inſtil them into their children, that they may grow up with them, and, after this life, expand into immortal happineſs! How earneſtly ought we to check the progreſs of all malevolent ſenſations! How anxious ſhould we be to avoid aſſociating any ideas of pleaſure with the ſight of miſery, with the infliction of pain, or with any act of inhumanity! The malignant paſſions are, even here, the ſource of the acuteſt miſery, to thoſe who unfortunately indulge them; and on the ſuppoſition, * I

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* The Scriptures give us reaſon to expect a reſurrection of the individual. What conſtitutes individuality is the conſciouſneſs of identity. Our reſurrection, or return to life, will not be complete, unleſs the conſciouſneſs, which conſtitutes the individuality of our preſent being, be annexed to our future. That this conſciouſneſs be complete, it is neceſſary that thoſe aſſociated ſenſorial motions and ſympathies, which conſtitute what may be called our moral nature, here, ſhould paſs with us into another world. In this life, improveable faculties, particularly of affection and ſympathy, are committed to us; and I think it probable, that our next ſtage of exiſtence will, probably, be a ſtate of improvement — Our Saviour has intimated to us, that, in heaven, there are many manſions. It is, therefore, highly probable, that, in theſe manſions, the condition and circumſtances of exiſtence will be purpoſely adapted to the former aſſociated moral habits of the individual; and beſt ſuited to their farther expanſion and improvement. Suppoſing man deſtined to an eternal exiſt-

have ſtated, they will prove a ſource of the moſt exquiſite torment in another life. Thus, the aſſociations,

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ence, we cannot imagine, that the firſt moment he is made the citizen of another kingdom, he will become as wiſe or as virtuous as he is capable of being; or as he will ever be; and that he will thus continue ſtationary, at one point, through all the revolutions of infinite time. It is a far more reaſonable and probable conjecture, that, in a future life, individuals will begin where they left off in this;—that they will ſtill poſſeſs improveable faculties, but to which, a greater vigor will be communicated, in proportion to the greater objects, about which they will be occupied; and the wider ſphere of exiſtence, which they will embrace.

As individuals are to carry with them into other manſions their former aſſociations and ſympathies, the benevolent and the malevolent, or the good and the wicked, muſt, after death, occupy very different ſtates of being; the former will migrate to a ſtate of comfort and happineſs—the latter of torment and miſery.

The benevolent, who have cheriſhed and have exerciſed all the kind and tender affections, will hereafter find them a ſource of the moſt exquiſite joy;—of a joy not mingled, as in this world, with bitterneſs, or ſoured by diſguſt. They will find objects ſuited to the expanſion of every amiable ſympathy, with which their hearts were ever warmed; and in proportion as the benevolent affections of the ſoul expand and multiply, by being placed in a ſcene more congenial to their nature,—in a ſcene where kindneſs, inſtead of being blaſted by ingratitude, will meet with kindneſs, and love with love;—in the ſame proportion, muſt the ſtock of their individual happineſs be augmented.

Far different will be the lot of the malevolent; who have aſſociated ideas of pleaſure with any acts of inhumanity; who have wilfully marred the fair proſpects of others happineſs, or contracted an inſenſibility to others miſery! We may imagine that ſuch perſons will, in a future ſcene of being, be placed under ſuch circumſtances, and amid ſuch relations, as that the want of benevolence ſhall be to them a ſource of exquiſite torture and unutterable woe.

of this ſtate not being diſſolved in the next, the malignant will be puniſhed by habitual and inalienable ſenſa-

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The eternity of puniſhments for temporary offences, and committed by beings who are covered with frailties, ſeems difficult to be reconciled to that attribute of INFINITE MERCY, or *what with reſpect to an All-perfect Being, is the ſame thing* that attribute of INFINITE JUSTICE, which belongs to the Maker of the univerſe, and the Father of mankind. May we not therefore infer (I ſpeak with deference to older and wiſer theologicians), without derogating, IN THE LEAST, *from the truth of Scripture*, that thoſe paſſages which deſcribe future puniſhments as eternal, are to be figuratively conſtrued; that they intend pains *of long — not of infinite duration; — vaſt — not irremediable or never-ceaſing affliction!* The wiſeſt and beſt legiſlators among men, have never conſidered puniſhment in any other light, than as conducive to moral amendment; — and is it not blaſphemy againſt the divine attributes, to ſuppoſe that the All-wiſe, All-juſt, and All-merciful *will ever inflict puniſhment for it's own ſake, and without any view to the good or the reformation of him on whom it is inflicted?* Let not our ignorance of the true Scripture idiom, and of Eaſtern phraſeology, lead us to this climax of folly and preſumption!!!

From a ſerious inveſtigation of the Divine attributes, and a candid and rational interpretation of Scripture, we may infer that the puniſhment of the wicked, in another world, *is deſigned for, and will tend to, their amendment*; — and, conſequently, that the malevolent will be gradually, though ſlowly, and by the experience of ſevere and excruciating miſery, cured of their habits of malignity. The difficulty of eradicating habits, which have been long indulged, is univerſally acknowledged; and, in a future world, it is not improbable that this difficulty may be ſtill more difficult. Thus, the puniſhment of the malignant, in another ſtate of exiſtence, tho' not eternal, *muſt neceſſarily be of long continuance*; — of a continuance ſo long as in the bold, unconditional and hyperbolical menace of the Eaſtern language, to merit *the name of the everlaſting fire.* Their agonies will, probably, have a duration beyond the reach of our narrow notions of time;

tions of their own malignity. They will, in ſome meaſure, reſemble the Devil, the real or allegorical element of evil; who is painted, in ſcripture, as continually going about, ſeeking whom he may devour; deſtitute of a ſingle ſpark of one benevolent ſympathy;—the image of pure, unmixed malignity!!! Could he have been more forcibly delineated, either to excite terror or abhorrence? But let us return to the contemplation of a more pleaſing form.

Of genuine humility, Jeſus was a ſtriking example, in his whole deportment; in every geſture, every word, every action. His humility was not the affectation of that virtue, which is ſo often aſſumed in the world, to cover an intolerable pride. It was pure and unadulterated; not the ſhow, but the ſubſtance of a lowly heart.

That the humility of Jeſus was not a veil for arrogance, or for vanity, he gave the moſt lively inſtance, on the night before his crucifixion, in waſhing the feet

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and will laſt till the conſciouſneſs of guilt has entirely vaniſhed; and the ſoul, *no longer it's own tormentor*, expands to the pleaſures of benevolence.

of his diſciples. This act of humiliation he performed, as a laſting admonition againſt that pride of heart, which often makes man look with diſdain on his brother-man.

There is nothing more ludicrous, in the eye of a contemplative philoſopher, and there can be nothing more impious, in the ſight of heaven, than that ſupercilious inſolence, with which, ambitious vanity, raiſed by accidental diſtinctions, regards thoſe beneath it. Such a temper Jeſus has forcibly reprimanded in the inſtance I have mentioned. "Ye call me," ſaid Jeſus, "maſter and lord; and ye ſay well, for ſo I am. If I, then, your lord and maſter, have waſhed your feet, ye ought alſo to waſh one another's feet. I have given you an example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you." John xiii. 13, 14, 15. As if he had ſaid, "If I, who was glorified with the father before the world was," John xvii. 5. can bend to the loweſt offices; and without ſullying my majeſty, can perform thoſe acts which are eſteemed the moſt ſervile degradations; ſhall thy vanity, O man, render thee arrogant and overbearing! Shalt thou deem thyſelf contaminated, by any act of condeſcenſion, becauſe thou happeneſt to be raiſed a ſtep higher in the ſcale of wealth or honour, than thy bro-

ther! If I did not refuſe the garb of mortality, and among mortals, the form of a ſervant, ſhalt thou, who, in the ſight of heaven, art but a worm of the earth, vainly fancy thyſelf made of better ſtuff than thy fellow-worm!

That meekneſs of temper and gentleneſs of manners, which is the genuine ornament of the Chriſtian, Jeſus recommended to his diſciples, in a way more perſuaſive and intereſting, than could have been done by all the ſtudied graces of poliſhed eloquence. Being aſked by his diſciples, "Who is the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven?" "he called a little child, and ſet him in the midſt of them;"—one, who was an image of benignity and ſauvity of diſpoſition; one, whoſe heart was not yet debaſed by a commerce with the world, or corroded by the paſſions of envy or ambition. * "Whoever," ſaid Jeſus, "ſhall humble himſelf, as this little child, the ſame is greateſt in the kingdom of heaven."

There is not, perhaps, a ſtronger indication of either

* See Matt. xviii.

meekneſs of ſpirit or benevolence of heart, than a kind attention to little children;—the roſe-tinged ſymbols of unſuſpicious innocence, in whoſe ſmile there is a captivation, that touches every chord of tenderneſs, and whoſe eyes, *beaming no guile*, ought to intereſt every beholder in their happineſs. He, who can behold the ſmooth and benign features of infancy without emotions of complacency and fondneſs, hath a heart indiſpoſed to the ſoft inſtillations of genuine benevolence. At the ſight of playful childhood, our ſympathy is awakened by the double attraction of it's helpleſſneſs and it's innocence; which will never fail, in the breaſt of the true follower of Jeſus, to excite ſtrong ſenſations of tenderneſs; which he, who does not or cannot feel, muſt, at leaſt, be imbued with the venom of malignity.

Jeſus ſeems to have conſidered a want of benevolence towards little children a proof of incurable depravity of heart. "Whoſo," ſaid he, "ſhall offend one of theſe little ones, it were better for him, that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the ſea." Again he ſays; "Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones; for I ſay unto

you, that, in heaven, their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven."*

"*Their angels do always behold the face of my father, which is in heaven.*" Who can think of this expreſſion, and dare to make the little deſtitute and *orphaned innocent* a victim of rapine, or a prey to ſorrow? Who can think of this expreſſion, when he contemplates the unwrinkled forehead of ſmiling infancy, without it's inſpiring in his breaſt the ſoft flow of thoſe benevolent ſenſations, of which language cannot convey the charm; and which, it is probable, reſemble, though in a faint degree, thoſe pleaſures which will be taſted in heaven, by "the ſpirits of good men made perfect?"

The attentive kindneſs of Jeſus, to little children, and his ſolicitude for their welfare, is no counterfeit or deceitful indication of the benevolence of his heart; of which we may gather a number of other delicate and intereſting traits, from the accounts, which the Evangeliſts have left of his amiable character.

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* Theſe expreſſions ſeem to intimate, that little children are, in a more ſpecial manner, dear to God, and the objects of his guardian providence.

It muſt be remembered, that the Evangeliſts are no panegyriſts. They are plain and artleſs relators of matters of fact. They make no efforts to intereſt the paſſions; they do not labour to lead men captive down the ſtream of their ſenſations. Brevity and ſimplicity are the characteriſtics of their relations; but their brevity is often more eloquent than the diffuſeneſs of eloquence; and their ſimplicity, which is the earneſt of their ſincerity, is more intereſting than the moſt ſplendid diction, elaborated into pathos, or refined into elegance.

In painting the likeneſs of Jeſus, ſuch as he was, and ſuch as they knew him to be, the Evangeliſts do not endeavour to ſet off the tenderneſs of his nature, in the gaudy array of modern rhetoric. They delineate his feelings, by deſcribing his acts; and they ſhew the kindneſs of his heart, by ſimply informing us of the extent of his beneficence.

When Simon Peter's wife's mother was dangerouſly ill with a fever; the Evangeliſt briefly tells us; "He came and *took her by the hand;* and *lifted her up,* and the fever left her." Mark i. 31.

When the centurion beſought Jeſus, for his ſervant who was ſick of the palſy, his commiſeration is not mentioned; but who does not read it in his anſwer? "*I will come and heal him.*"—Here, I cannot help obſerving, that we never hear Jeſus pleading buſineſs, or the occupation of perſonal or temporal concerns, as an excuſe for not doing good. The beneficence he exerts, he does not endeavour to magnify, as we are too apt to do, as a ſacrifice of time or a neglect of other intereſts.

He does not vex the wretched by ſuſpenſe, or by holding out hopes which were never meant to be realiſed. How many, among the ſons of men, are ſolicitous to obtain, without coſt, the praiſe of beneficence? when, perhaps, they deſerve nothing but execrations, for prolonging the wearineſs of miſery, and abuſing confidence by fallacious promiſes, till all the energies of hope wither and periſh under the anguiſh of diſappointment. It was not ſo with Jeſus;—he did not aggravate the ſufferings of the unhappy by the bitterneſs of "hope deferred."

In St. Luke viii. we are told, that "a ruler of the ſynagogue fell down at Jeſus' feet; and beſought him,

that he would come into his houſe; *for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and ſhe lay a dying.*" It may not be amiſs to remark, what ſimplicity and yet what genuine pathos there is in this conciſe narrative.

We behold the father rent with diſtraction, at the laſt ſickneſs of an only child, throwing himſelf at the feet of Jeſus; and imploring mercy. At this affecting ſpectacle, did no tear of ſympathy ſtart into the eye of Jeſus? The Evangeliſt is ſilent;—but we learn from what follows, that Jeſus was not an unconcerned ſpectator of a father's anguiſh.

Before Jeſus could arrive at the houſe, the ruler of the ſynagogue receives a meſſage;—" Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the maſter." The ſympathiſing tenderneſs of Jeſus now ſhews itſelf; but yet it is not made, as it were, to project from the page of the hiſtorian, or to catch attention by any pomp of language or parade of ſorrow.

At the news of his daughter's death, it is probable, that the fond parent could no longer reſtrain the violence

of his grief; but the divine comforter was at hand to aſſuage it. "Fear not," ſaid he, "believe only and ſhe ſhall be ſaved." This is an expreſſion of condolence, not feigned and artificial, as the ſum of human condolence uſually is, but ſimple and ſincere; kindly chaſing away ſorrow, and recalling the drooping eye to happineſs.

When Jeſus arrived at the ruler's houſe, he ſuffered none to enter, but his favourite diſciples, Peter, James and John, and the father and mother of the deceaſed. That delicacy which characteriſed the benevolence of Jeſus, is ſeen even in this little circumſtance. He would not add to the affliction of the parents, by the idle gaze of thronging curioſity.

The ſight of a dead corpſe is, at all times, a melancholy ſpectacle; and more particularly ſo, when that corpſe is *youth cut off in it's prime.* To the parents, bereft of the only pledge of their union, and hope of their age, it muſt have been a moſt excruciating and heart-rending ſight. Not one, indeed, of thoſe who were preſent could look on with dry eyes; "*they all wept and bewailed her.*"

Jeſus, in whoſe breaſt, commiſeration was never chilled by apathy, endeavours to cheer them with his accuſtomed ſimplicity of manner. "Weep not; ſhe is not dead, but ſleepeth." But "they laughed him to ſcorn." How natural is this part of the narrative!

In great depreſſion of mind, when the ſpirits can no longer bear up againſt the weight that oppreſſes them, it is revolting to be told that our pains are imaginary, and our ſorrows an illuſion. "They laughed him to ſcorn;"—not that they would not willingly have believed his words, "ſhe is not dead but ſleepeth," true; but becauſe they were convinced of the reality of her deceaſe; and, perhaps, thought it a reproach on their underſtanding (man, even in the midſt of agony, is not impervious to the touch of pride), to have an affliction imputed to fancy, which they too truly felt to be a ſad reality. They, therefore, treated his ſuggeſtion with deriſion.

But the dead ſoon recovered, as if from ſleep, at the energetic call of Jeſus: "Maid, ariſe!" And he commanded to give her meat." Having reſtored life, his

benevolence was not ſatisfied without annexing the means of ſupporting it.

Of the ſympathiſing tenderneſs of Jeſus, we have another very characteriſtic but artleſs relation, in Luke vii. As Jeſus was approaching the city of Nain, "behold there was a dead man carried out, the only ſon of his mother and ſhe was a widow." What ſimplicity and pathos is there in this narration! The ſubject is made to furniſh it's own ornaments; it is cumbered with no embelliſhments.

The dead man, with whom the mourners were proceeding to the place of interment, "was *the only ſon* of his mother, *and ſhe was a widow.*" After having mourned over the corpſe of her huſband, ſhe was now going to behold interred in the ſilent grave, the only remains of their mutual affection. The ſon, who, perhaps, ſhe fondly hoped would be the ſtay of her infirmities, and the ſolace of her age; and who, in the ordinary courſe of nature, ought to have ſurvived her, had gone before her.

The heart of Jeſus was too prone to ſympathy to let

him ſullenly paſs by the poor deſtitute. "When the Lord ſaw her he had compaſſion on her;" and ſaid unto her, with his wonted brevity, "Weep not." *He* had not learned that verboſe ſtyle of condolence, which ſays much and means nothing. His conciſe "weep not," was more impreſſive than all the flowery tautology of modern commiſeration.

"And he came and touched the bier; and they that bore him ſtood ſtill;" and he exclaimed with an authority, which can either deſtroy the living, or animate the dead; "Young man, I ſay unto thee, ariſe! and he that was dead ſat up, and began to ſpeak." This moment ſtiff and motionleſs as a clod,—in the next, the current of life, freſh and warm, ruſhed into the heart; and the tongue, that was thought ſilent for ever, ſpoke again."

But the ſympathiſing tenderneſs of Jeſus, did not ceaſe, while any, the leaſt opportunity remained for it's exerciſe. He had raiſed the young man to life; but this was not enough, till he had reſtored him to the embraces of his mother;* and witneſſed the tears of afflic-

* The Evangeliſt briefly tells us, "and he delivered him to his mother;" he does not detail the manner of doing it.

tion giving way to the warm and refreshing drops that would flow from the renewal of their mutual affection. How affecting, and yet how delicious, must this interview have been! How similar to that which departed friends will experience, when they meet again in a happier world!

We may learn, from these instances which I have adduced, and to which many others might be added, that the heart of Jesus was susceptible of the most delicate sensations of compassion;—that his benevolence was not a vapid effervescence, but fresh with life, vigorous in pursuit, unwearied in exertion, choice, not indiscriminate, in it's objects;—and that he knew how to give a softening charm to the most signal acts of beneficence, by the kindness of manner with which he performed them.

The benevolence of Jesus, though unbounded, was yet not that pretended and much-boasted sentiment of universal love, which loses sight of individual misery; and scorns the endearing ties which bind families and nations. He went about doing good; binding up the broken-hearted; pouring comfort into the bosom of the

wretched. As he came to exhibit a character, proper for the imitation of man, he came adorned with all thoſe affections, which are the brighteſt ornaments of our nature.

Men can never be brought to ſquare their actions by a rule which they do not underſtand.—Such a rule is that of the *general good*, which Mr. Godwin recommends to his diſciples, as a ſafe and unerring guide through the intricate maze of human intercourſe; and as the beſt and only infallible teſt of juſtice and benevolence. By this he would appreciate the worth of the human character.

But *the general good*, is a rule of conduct which no individual can comprehend; becauſe he can never ſo nicely balance the average of all the particular intereſts of the different parts of the community, as to know wherein the general intereſt reſides. But though we cannot aſcertain how, moſt effectually, to promote the general good, yet we can readily diſcern by what mode of conduct we can beſt promote the good of individuals.

Benevolence, therefore, conſiſts in doing good to in-

dividuals, without ſtaying nicely to examine how the good done may affect the public intereſt. We are not to ſuffer the heat of benevolence to expire, while we are making ſuch cold-blooded calculations.

Man is the creature of ſympathy; and, therefore, in his conduct to his fellow-creatures, he will be ruled by it's impulſe. But no individual can ſympathiſe with the general good, or with an impalpable abſtraction; for ſympathy implies diſtinct ſenſations of tenderneſs towards ſome particular object; and which, at leaſt, in ſome degree, correſpond with the ſenſations in the object by which our ſympathy is excited. We can, therefore, only ſympathiſe with the intereſts of individuals.

If I were to behold a perſon weltering in his blood or writhing in agony, from a broken limb, on the high-way, he would inſtantly excite my ſympathy; and I ſhould endeavour to procure him relief and conſolation, without once conſidering whether the community would be more benefited by his death than his recovery. But, according to the benevolent ſyſtem of Mr. Godwin, this calculation ought to be the preliminary to any exertions of kindneſs; and, according to his notions, if the

intereſts of the community could have been promoted by the death of this poor wretch, or if the relief adminiſtered could have been applied in ſome other way, more productive of general good, then this act of humanity would become an act of injuſtice.

Mr. Godwin, in his Pol. Juſt. b. 2. c. 2. *on juſtice*, intimates, that the relations of blood, of friendſhip and of gratitude are conſiderations beneath the regard of a rational being; who, in his whole conduct, ought to ſtudy the intereſt of the community, though at the expenſe of any individual, even one as dear to him as a brother, a father or a benefactor.

Mr. G. puts a caſe, to ſhew how a man ought to act, when what he calls juſtice claſhes with ſympathy.

If the palace of Fenelon, the author of Telemachus, had been on fire, and the alternative had been, that either the archbiſhop or his valet muſt periſh in the flames, Mr. Godwin would have preferred preſerving the life of the former, as more conducive to the general weal; even though the valet had been his brother, his father or his benefactor.

Mr. G. thinks that an individual ought to ſacrifice all perſonal affections and duties, to that one great duty, which he owes to the community. Did man approach nearer to a ſtate of pure intelligence, did he excel in that largeneſs of mind and comprehenſion of view, which, at one glance, could diſcern the aggregate intereſt of the body politic, his reaſoning would be juſt; but, at preſent, the rule by which he propoſes to regulate human conduct is much more fallible than that of ſympathy, or the preference of individual good to the good of the community.

While we remain ſo ignorant of that in which the general weal conſiſts, there ſeems no reaſon, why, in the vain ſearch of an ideal good, we ſhould exhale into airy nothingneſs, all the ſweet though partial affections of family and of friendſhip. In the caſe which Mr. G. propoſes, who would not prefer ſaving the life of his brother, his father or his benefactor, to that of the archbiſhop.

Mr. G. ſays, that the maxim of our Saviour, which directs us "to love our neighbour as ourſelves," is not modelled with the ſtrictneſs of philoſophical accuracy.

It certainly does not propoſe, as a rule of life, a cold abſtraction, intricate and embarraſſing, which it muſt be always difficult to underſtand, and on which it can be ſeldom ſafe to act;—but it propoſes a rule of life which comes home to every man's boſom; and of which neither the learned nor unlearned can miſtake the application. It is a maxim, which he, who invariably purſues, will never act wrong. It will preſerve him from every act of injuſtice and of inhumanity. It is a maxim, which gives life and energy to all the ſweet domeſtic affections, which ſtrengthens the ſentiment of love, of friendſhip and of gratitude, and which teaches us to identify our feelings with thoſe of wretchedneſs, in all it's forms.

The virtue of individuals, ſeems to conſiſt not ſo much in ſerving the aggregate, as the detail of ſociety; not ſo much in general as partial good; for the influence of any ſingle act on the whole map of ſociety, is beyond the utmoſt ſtretch of calculation.—When we behold miſery in it's minute detail, we can adjuſt the means to the end, the relief to the neceſſity. It is impoſſible to do ſo, if we ſtrive to embrace a wider ſphere of action, too vaſt for our graſp, too immenſe for our diſcernment.

Would but individuals, with a tender and mutual benevolence, ſtrive to promote the welfare of other individuals, dear or endeared to them, by blood, by friendſhip or by gratitude, or by ſome of the many tender incitements of ſympathy, the general happineſs would, ultimately, be much more effectually promoted by the beneficence of every man, directed towards particular and ſpecific objects, than by the ſolitary and more ambitious exertions of each individual, to produce not partial but univerſal good.

I think I may ſafely ſay, that no man was ever warmed with the genuine fire of univerſal benevolence, while he was entirely exempt from all local and perſonal attachments. No good man can be inſenſible to the delicate and inſinuating partialities of friendſhip, of kindred and of country. Theſe affections are almoſt inſeperable from our frame; and are produced by thoſe numberleſs aſſociations of ideas, and ſenſations of paſt and preſent time, of which we can neither calculate the power, nor controul the influence. The principle of aſſociation ſeems, indeed, by the wiſe author of all things, to have been made a part of our nature; for the purpoſe of connecting us by the ſtrongeſt and deareſt

ties with our families and our homes; and making us feel, more vigorouſly, the inſpiring glow of friendſhip and of patriotiſm.

The breaſt of an individual is too narrow to feel, with any diſtinctneſs, the ſentiment of univerſal philanthropy. Our affections muſt, at leaſt at firſt, have ſome diſtinct object on which to fix;—an object, whoſe magnitude is not too great for the excitement of lively and particular ſenſations. What is termed univerſal philanthropy, is merely a general and confuſed feeling, ſeldom animating to energetic action.* As we muſt proceed from particular to general truths, ſo it is from

* That philanthropy is counterfeit, which is not attended by benevolent ſympathies and benevolent actions. Since the death of Howard, (peace to thy aſhes, and glory to thy memory, thou miniſtering angel to the cells of miſery!) Count Rumford, the poor man's patron and every man's friend, deſerves the foremoſt rank in the liſt of philanthropiſts.—Nor can the wreath of philanthropy well be denied to the brows of Darwin and of Beddoes; whoſe ſingular ability and induſtry, in ſoothing the the moſt calamitous of human afflictions, and in diminiſhing the numerous ills, which life has to encounter from infancy to age, from the cradle to the grave, merit a ſtatue on every ſhore, where the traces of humanity are to be found. Among the illuſtrious names, that human gratitude will tranſmit down the ſtream of time, there are few which poſterity will repeat with more reverence, than thoſe of Darwin and of Beddoes.

individual affections alone, that the ſoul expands to the genuine, ardent and diffuſive love of the human race. From the affections of family, of friendſhip, and of the ſpot which was endeared to us by early intercourſe, by tender recollection, and by numberleſs aſſociations, ſprings the love of our country; and thence the heart kindling with increaſed benevolence, and catching the flame of divine love, enlarges into a wider and wider ſphere, till it opens to embrace the world.

I am not, indeed, ignorant that many perſons have felt the heat of the partial and local affections; have loved their kindred, their friends and their country; whoſe boſoms never glowed with the ſentiment of univerſal benevolence;* and that many who have diſclaimed

* One of the perſons here alluded to, is Mr. Burke. Of the character of this extraordinary perſonage, I ſhall preſent the reader with a ſlight ſketch, not drawn from perſonal acquaintance, but from calm reflection on his conduct and his writings.

The affections of Mr. Burke all gravitated towards his kindred, incapable of a wider expanſion. Of philanthropy, he poſſeſſed but little; or he would not have ſtruggled ſo long, and with ſo much energy and obſtinacy, to produce the extermination, by fire and ſword, of twenty-four million of his fellow-men. His morality was neither enlarged by a diffuſive benevolence, nor animated by an enlightened piety. His friendſhip was warm while it laſted; but it was liable to be interrupted by the irri-

the tender charities of family, friends and kindred, have loudly boaſted of being fired with the ſpirit of univerſal

table petulance of his temper. Inflated with the pride of genius, he was impatient of contradiction; and his reſentments were, in more than one inſtance, indulged even to bitterneſs.

His fame, with poſterity, will reſt chiefly on the ſplendour of his eloquence; but this being employed rather in the embelliſhment of prejudices that are evaneſcent, than in ſupport of principles that are immortal; I doubt whether it have earned him a wreath of glory, that may wave defiance to the rage of time. His ſtyle, as an orator, is vehement, impetuous, and often highly impaſſioned; fraught with the beautiful combinations of genius, and diſplaying the magnificent decorations of an exuberant fancy; but he is rarely diſcriminated by thoſe ſublime conceptions, which ariſe from comprehenſive views, and which mark an intellect of the higheſt order. His wit ſparkles with brilliancy; it's flaſhes often captivate as much by their juſtneſs as their ſplendour; but he ſometimes purſues them till they loſe their luſtre, and languor takes place of aſtoniſhment.

When he attempts to reaſon in a logical order, his arguments, too often, reſemble the Sibyl's leaves; they are diſperſed in a moment, by the breath of his imagination. His judgment may, for a while, rule his fancy; but his fancy always, at laſt, ſucceeds in ruling his judgment.

He was well acquainted with men, and with human affairs in their little detail; but he does not ſeem to have conſidered, like a philoſopher, the general principles, or like a benevolent Chriſtian, the general intereſts of human nature. His political reaſonings are often weak, becauſe they are taken entirely from partial views, and from fleeting intereſts; and do not reſt on the baſis of eternal and unchangeable truth. Could he have effected his wiſhes, he would have eſtabliſhed an oligarchy of wealth and rank, on the ruins of the rights of mankind. He would have placed the liberties of the people on no firmer baſis than that of the conceſſions of the crown; and he would have deſpoiled the monarchy of thoſe wholeſome

Philanthropy.* With reſpect to thoſe of the firſt claſs, I ſtrongly ſuſpect that it will be found, that their affec-

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limitations, which are a ſource of happineſs both to the prince and to the people.

The principles of Mr. Burke, ſeem to have been rather modified by his intereſt, than his intereſt by his principles. His principal purſuit was private emolument; but he endeavoured to impreſs on others, till perhaps he had impreſſed on himſelf, the conviction that it was the public good. His private embarraſſments, increaſed by inattention and profuſeneſs, unfortunately for his country and for the world, rendered him venal; and, if we may judge from his ſentiments on the reſiſtance of America, his opinions on the French revolution, were leſs ſwayed by his conſcience than his penſion. —— Poſſeſſing thoſe energies of genius, which, taking an independent direction, might have rendered him as much the benefactor as he was the ornament of his ſpecies; his talents contributed but little to enlarge the ſtock of wiſdom; and though they have rendered ſome ſervice to taſte, and have diverſified the elegant combinations of language; yet theſe are but paltry benefits, compared with the miſeries of that deſolating conteſt, in which, they contributed to involve his country.

* Rouſſeau has been too often extolled as a philanthropiſt. Mr. Burke ſaid of him, that he loved his kind and hated his kindred.—The expoſure of his children, by whatever ſophiſtry it may be excuſed, is an indelible blot on his humanity; and invalidates all his pretenſions to philanthropy. For, can that philanthropy be genuine, which is founded on the extinction of the parental affections; and which, with more than ſavage brutality, forſakes the poor innocents, it brings into the world?

Every page of Rouſſeau glows with the captivations of that ſentimental luxury, of which he is ſo great a maſter; and which he arrays in all the blandiſhments of eloquence. Hence the ſource of that admiration, which his writings have ſo univerſally excited. Though his judgment, as a philoſopher, was not ſo profound; yet his taſte was ſo exquiſite, that

tions were prevented, by narrow prejudices, from a wider expanſion. Of the laſt claſs, I fear that the

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he ſtrews flowers in the moſt rugged way, and intereſts the paſſions and the fancy, in the inveſtigation of the moſt abſtract propoſitions. This is his great excellence.

In his new Eloiſe, the intereſt conſiſts, not ſo much in the diverſity or the combination of the incidents, as in the beauty of the ſentiment and the magic of the diction. The picture of Julia, is highly finiſhed; but it leaves on the mind more impreſſions of reſpect, than of tenderneſs, of admiration than of love.—At times, ſhe appears an heterogeneous mixture of apathies and paſſion, of prudence and of coquetry. In ſome ſituations ſhe wants tenderneſs; in others firmneſs; and ſhe is often leſs governed by the warm impulſes of affection, than by the abſtractions of philoſophy.

His Emilus, though marked by the illuminating touches and the original conceptions of genius, yet, conſidered as a ſyſtem, is more conſpicuous for it's ſingularity than it's truth. It pourtrays a ſyſtem of education, which, if it were univerſally adopted, would keep the human ſpecies in a ſtate of permanency between light and darkneſs, between ſavage barbarity and civilized refinement. It would counteract the moral and phyſical improvement of man; the progreſs of knowledge and the productiveneſs of induſtry.

Though Rouſſeau had little beneficence, yet his writings, breathing nothing but the reciprocal love and kindneſs and confidence of the Golden Age, contributed, by their wide diffuſion and their enchanting eloquence to render humanity faſhionable; and they have, at leaſt, this merit, —that no man can well riſe from reading them, without feeling a higher reſpect for his ſpecies.

That extreme and febrile ſenſibility, which was the characteriſtic peculiarity of Rouſſeau, while it proved the origin of many of his miſeries, was, perhaps, a principal ſource of his greatneſs. It imparted a ſingular delicacy, freſhneſs and animation to every page of his writings.—His

majority are uſually men of little virtue and leſs ſenſibility; too cold for friendſhip; too inert for beneficence; and claiming the wreath of philanthropy, without deſerving it by any acts of humanity.

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feelings, in whatever channel they flowed, ruſhed on with a reſiſtleſs impetuoſity; but, in the end, they made a wreck of his underſtanding. His judgment was loſt in the unremitting turbulence of his ſenſations; and in ſome intervals of inſanity, he exhibited the melancholy proſpect of genius crumbling into ruins.

The language of Rouſſeau, was always a faithful mirror of what was paſſing in the heart; which now thrilled with rapture, and now raged with paſſion. Of his ſtyle, the peculiar characteriſtic, is exuberance of imagery; profuſion, without diſtinction of luſtre. It often reſembles a landſcape, in which there is a great aſſemblage of beautiful forms, without any intermediate ſpots of barrenneſs; but without any objects of a ſtriking and prominent grandeur; and, in the contemplation of which, the eye is, at laſt, ſatiated by the uniformity.—Yet, highly coloured as is the eloquence, of Rouſſeau, I believe that the generality of readers would peruſe his works with leſs reliſh, if they were leſs adorned. And, it muſt be confeſſed, that the ornaments with which they are embelliſhed, are not the frippery and patchwork of a paltry artiſt, but the rich copiouſneſs of an highly ſaturated imagination; and they often poſſeſs a charm, of which, even the apathy of the coldeſt critic can hardly be inſenſible to the faſcination.—He who wiſhes to perfect himſelf in thoſe delicacies of language or curious felicities of phraſeology, which impreſs a palpable form, a living entity on the fleeting tints and ſenſations of the heart, ſhould carefully analyſe the genius of the ſtyle of Rouſſeau; ſhould ſearch into the cauſes, from which reſult the beauty and ſplendour of his combinations; and endeavour to extract, from an attentive peruſal of the Eloiſe and the Emilus, a portion of that taſte by which they were inſpired.

Individuals ourſelves, our affections (if I may uſe a quaint expreſſion) have a natural tendency towards individuality. He who pretends to love all perſons alike, really loves none. There can, in the human breaſt, be no general and univerſal, without ſome partial affections. It is from the combination of particular ſympathies, of perſonal and local attachments, that we at laſt imbibe the flame of a comprehenſive and boundleſs benevolence.

The breaſt of Jeſus was certainly warmed with the brighteſt fires of univerſal love; but that love did not extinguiſh the leſſer charities. The ſpirit of philanthropy did not liberate him from the tender bondage of local and perſonal attachments. His heart was not inſenſible to the ſympathies of private friendſhip. * Tho' he ſelected twelve perſons to be his diſciples and conſtant companions; yet of theſe twelve he ſeems to have regarded three, Peter, James, and John, † with a more

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* See John xi. 5.

† They alone of his diſciples were permitted to be preſent at his transfiguration, and during his agony in the garden. See Matt. xxvi. 37. The Evangeliſts have exhibited the character of Peter, more diſtinctly than

peculiar and affectionate confidence; and of theſe three, one is emphatically ſtyled "the Apoſtle whom Jeſus

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that of the other apoſtles.—The paſſions of Peter were ſtrong, but they were not under the controul of his diſcretion. His attachment to his maſter, partaking of his conſtitutional vivacity, was fervent and ſincere; but, like moſt men of a ſanguinary temperament, he ſeems to have been governed rather by impulſe than reflection. The impetuoſity of his temper often embarraſſed him in errors; and his firſt emotions were too vehement to be laſting.—What he felt, he felt ſtrongly; but the violence of his ſenſations occaſioned him to over-look the diſproportion between his ſtrength and his reſolutions. From the effervescence of heroiſm, he ſunk into the languor of cowardice.—He had zeal—but it was not moderated by prudence, nor confirmed by perſeverance. He was ready to encounter danger, without meaſuring it's magnitude; eager in purſuit, he looked only at the end, without regarding it's intermediate obſtacles. One inſtant we behold him plunging into the ſea, impatient to meet Jeſus, and made buoyant by faith, walking ſteadily on the waters—the next, he faulters on the billows, and exclaims, in deſpondency, "Lord, help me, I periſh!"—When his maſter was apprehended, he inſtantly drew his ſword; and, in a moment of paſſion, prepared, like a brave man, for reſiſtance; but when he ſaw the ſoldiers leading Jeſus away to judgment, he followed the puſillanimous example of the apoſtles, who "forſook him and fled."—Still the emotions of fear ſeems to have been ſoon replaced by that of affection; and Peter was never backward in obeying the impulſe of his ſenſations. He got admiſſion into the hall of judgment; and, here, we might ſuppoſe that he would not have appeared, unleſs he had ſummoned courage to avow himſelf, and to live or to periſh with his maſter.—But far otherwiſe; his fortitude is no ſooner put to the teſt, than he even denies all knowledge of Jeſus; and, like moſt perſons who are conſcious of falſhood, he endeavours to ſtrengthen the weakneſs of his aſſertions, by the effrontery of oaths and the wickedneſs of perjuries.—But obſerve the

loved."* John was the congenial friend of his ſoul; and dear to him, as Jonathan was to David.

Striped of the ſweet domeſtic affections, and deſtitute of the love of friends or kindred, how naked, deſolate and cheerleſs would the heart of man be!!! Where, in miſery, ſhould we ſeek for refuge or for ſympathy, if the benevolent ſyſtem of ſome late moraliſts were to be permitted to freeze into a cold, inſenſate maſs every warm drop of happineſs which is inſtilled into the heart, by the tender connections of family and of friendſhip?

No man can live long in the world, without contracting ſome individual attachments. A congeniality of ſentiments, or of manners, among thoſe with whom we mingle in the intercourſe of life, will, naturally,

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rapid viciſſitude of his ſenſations! *One look* from his ſuffering maſter, whom he had ſo lately and ſo reſolutely denied, was ſufficient to melt him into tears and to rend him with remorſe.—"He went out, and wept bitterly."—Such was Peter! and ſuch, alas! is too often the checquered image of thoſe, who are moſt renowned for their virtue or their piety!

* The character of John, which rendered him worthy of being beloved by Jeſus, ſeems to have been diſtinguiſhed by the moſt amiable benevolence. His Epiſtles inculcate love to mankind, as the ſum of all religion. See 1 John iii. 11, 14, 17, 18, 23, and iv. 7, 8, 11, 12, 16, 20, 21.

excite a ſtronger degree of affection towards them, than towards others. Though friendſhip may ſubſiſt, and perhaps with great livelineſs of ſenſations, where there are ſome few diſſimilitudes of temper, of genius and manners, yet it cannot be cemented among thoſe, between whom there is, in thoſe reſpects, a total and irreconcileable diſcordancy.—Friendſhip derives it's energy and it's ſpirit from the power of ſympathy. We naturally love thoſe moſt, in whoſe company we enjoy the greateſt degree of pleaſurable ſenſation; and this we certainly muſt do, with thoſe whoſe habits approach the neareſt to our own; with whom we can indulge a bland communion of happineſs, to whom we can impart our joys and ſorrows, ſure of their exciting correſponding vibrations in their ſympathetic boſoms.

It is obſervable, that thoſe of the ſame family are uſually moſt attached to each other, who are moſt aſſociated in the intercourſe of childhood. Conſtant intercourſe tends to wear away the aſperities and diſſimilitudes of diſpoſition, in which they differ from each other, as individuals; and to bring them, in ſome meaſure to a common likeneſs. It ſtrengthens the affections of kindred, by the more powerful influence of ſympathy.

Brothers and ſiſters, who ſee little of each other, and, in whom, the ties of nature are not invigorated by a conſtant and endearing intercourſe, and, particularly, at that period when the heart is moſt ſenſative to tender impreſſions, moſt ready to aſſimilitate itſelf to the diſpoſitions of thoſe around it, and to caſt, as it were, anew, in the mould of aſſociation, have ſeldom any more than a very ſlight regard for each other;—a regard that may be juſt kept alive by a ſenſe of duty; but which glows not with the fondneſs of love. Affection ariſes from frequently placing ourſelves in the ſituations of others, from being allotted a ſhare in their joys and ſorrows, from a kind interchange of ſentiments and intereſts, from the impalpable agency of a thouſand nameleſs ſympathetic attractions, and is therefore chilled and withered without continual intercourſe.

Friendſhip, when it is warm, genuine and ſincere, partakes in a great meaſure of the ſacredneſs of the kindred affections. It ſuppoſes an identity of intereſts, a communion of ſenſations, a reciprocity of love. Our friend is to us as a brother.

Jeſus well knew that a tender and reciprocal friend-

ſhip can gladden the melancholy path of human life. He therefore ſanctioned, by his example, that pure flame of private friendſhip, which inſpires different perſons with an identity of intereſts, and which, while it increaſes the happineſs of individuals, need ſubſtract nothing from the ſum of general benevolence.

That Jeſus was neither an enemy nor a ſtranger to the tender ſympathies, we may learn from various parts of the Evangelic memoirs; and, particularly, from his behaviour on the occaſion of Lazarus's death, which is related in John xi. and which places the meſſenger of immortality in a light equally amiable and intereſting.

The Evangeliſt tells us, in his plain and artleſs way, that "Jeſus loved Martha, and her ſiſter, and Lazarus." Lazarus being taken ill, his ſiſters ſent Jeſus this conciſe but affecting meſſage. "Lord, *he whom thou loveſt* is ſick." More, certainly, was not wanting to work on our Saviour's tenderneſs. Of courſe, we might expect to read, that he haſtened, without delay, to the ſick bed of his friend.—No; he waited two days in the place where he was.—But was it apathy? was it inſenſibility to the call of ſuffering friendſhip?—No; the delay was

certainly as painful to Jesus as it was to the sisters of Lazarus.—But Providence never sends his sunshine but in the fullest seasons; and Jesus manifested the wisdom as well as the goodness of his father, who often sees it best, for awhile, to withhold his blessings, even from those he loves.

In the mean time Lazarus died. Had Jesus been present, he knew that he could not have resisted the languishing looks of his friend, or the solicitations of his sisters, to save him ere he died.—He therefore prudently declined going to the house till after his death. This is plainly intimated in the speech, of Jesus to his disciples. "I am glad," said he, "for your sakes, that I was not there to the intent that ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him."

Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him; but Mary sat still.—By the by, how well does this little incident mark the characteristic eagerness of Martha, and the graver and more pensive turn of Mary? and how well does it agree with what St. Luke x. has related of the two sisters; of whom Martha is said to be "cumbered about much serving,"

while Mary "ſat at Jeſus' feet, and heard his word?" —How well is the unity of characters ſupported in the four Evangeliſts, and what can better prove that they are not the hiſtorians of fiction but of facts; and that they had ſeen and converſed with the perſons they deſcribe?—To paſs from this digreſſion: "Lord, if thou hadſt been here," ſaid Martha, to Jeſus, with her natural impatience, "My brother had not died!"—"Thy brother," ſaid Jeſus, "ſhall riſe again;" and again he gives the ſame aſſurance, with more than uſual energy and ſolemnity. "I am the reſurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever liveth and believeth in me ſhall never die."—Martha now left Jeſus to call her ſiſter Mary, who, "when ſhe had come where Jeſus was, and ſaw him, fell down at his feet; ſaying unto him, Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died!"—When Jeſus beheld Mary, her ſiſter, and their friends overwhelmed in miſery, he ſeems to have been deeply affected. The Evangeliſt deſcribes his grief in theſe plain but ſtrong terms. "He groaned in the ſpirit and was troubled;" and again "Jeſus wept!" Overcome by the tenderneſs of his nature, he could not reſtrain the ſigh of ſympathy or the tear of friendſhip. The

violence of his ſorrow ſeems to have excited the notice of the Jews; who, either from the ſudden impulſe of admiration, or of envy, exclaimed: "Behold, *how* he loved him!"—Jeſus now, "groaning in the ſpirit," goes up to the tomb, in which his friend was laid, and exclaims, in a voice which, at the laſt hour, will awaken the myriads of myriads that have paſſed into the regions of forgetfulneſs, "Lazarus, come forth." In an inſtant, the ſpirit of life returned to the body, which had begun to paſs into corruption.

The behaviour of Jeſus, in this ſcene of affliction, ſpeaks, in the moſt captivating manner, the tenderneſs of his feelings, and the warmth of his affections.—His friendſhip was not a ſickly and tranſitory glow of fondneſs, the mere vapour of caprice, or the ebullition of appetite;—it did not originate from a familiarity in vice, nor was it polluted by the baſe alloy of venality and intereſt.—It was a friendſhip excited by ſympathy, cheriſhed by benevolence and preſerved by eſteem.—It was formed of elements, not periſhable, but immortal;—a friendſhip, which death does not extinguiſh; but only transfers it into ſome happier country; and places it in circumſtances more genial to it's growth, and more

auſpicious to it's expanſion; where no ſtorms can ſhake the firmneſs of it's roofs, and no blights wither the beauty of it's branches.

As Jeſus was not inſenſible to friendſhip, neither was he callous to the affections, which ought to unite kindred blood.—When agonizing on the croſs, his own pains did not make him forgetful of his mortal mother. He ſaw her ſtanding by his croſs; the thought of her deſtitute condition awakened his ſympathy; and he commended her, with peculiar earneſtneſs, to the care of his beloved diſciple. "Behold," ſaid he to the Evangeliſt, "thy mother!" The moſt elaborate recommendation could not have ſaid more; and more was not neceſſary to be ſaid, to make the Apoſtle feel the love of a ſon for the mother of his dying maſter.

Providence, by having diſtributed mankind into families, and willed the relations of huſband and wife, father and child, of brother and ſiſter, hath impreſſed the ſeal of ſacredneſs on the kindred affections. But though nature has ſown the ſeeds of theſe affections, yet they will not ſhoot up and bloſſom without careful cultivation. They require the benign and foſtering breath of

ſympathy, to bring them to a vigorous maturity, and to enable them to ſtand againſt the changes and inclemencies of life. But the kindred affections, when they have been ſtrengthened by a long and continued interchange of kindneſſes, and by a multiplicity of agreeable aſſociations, are a ſource of pure and exquiſite happineſs. They reſemble that fragrant incenſe of piety, which the Spirit of love wafts from the heart of the righteous to the throne of the Eternal.

Of all the affections which can warm the heart of man, that of conjugal love, which unites the blandiſhments of all the kindred charities, with a thouſand additional captivations, ſeems the beſt adapted to increaſe the ſum of human happineſs. Perhaps, on no occaſion, did Jeſus more clearly demonſtrate his knowledge of the genuine ſource of ſocial and domeſtic bliſs, than in the reſtraints which he impoſed on the nuptial union. He did not conſider marriage as a mere tranſient aſſociation, to be formed as the appetite prompts, and to be diſſolved as it decays.

Our Saviour evidently conſiders marriage as a religious obligation. He ſays, Matt. x. xi. 6. " What

God hath joined together, let no man put aſunder." He here conſecrates the relations of man and wife, by the ſanctions of the divine law; which is ſuperior in force to any civil inſtitutions.—Civil inſtitutions may preſcribe the outward form, according to which, marriage ſhall be celebrated; but the outward form, by no means, conſtitutes the ſacredneſs of marriage in a religious view. The outward form gives the ſanction of decency to the union of the ſexes; but that union, will ſtill partake of the eſſence of proſtitution, unleſs it be aſſociated with the inward ſenſe of a divine obligation, feelingly impreſſed on the conſcience of the contracting parties. Wherever matrimony is entered into without any religious conſiderations of the moral duties it enjoins, it is a ſenſual, profane and unhallowed connexion.

Regarding marriage on Chriſtian principle, nothing but actual adultery can juſtify it's diſſolution; and, in all caſes, adultery, wherever it is clearly eſtabliſhed, ought, inſtantly, to cancel the validity of the marriage. —Nay, in the eye of the Almighty, one adulterous deſire, breathing it's pollution on the heart, ſtains it with the guilt of adultery. Matt. v. 28.

Were we to regard marriage, without any relation to the divine law or to the Chriſtian ſanctions, as a mere civil contract, then there would, no longer, be any reaſon, why it ſhould not ceaſe when it became mutually diſagreeable to the parties concerned; when it diſappointed their mutual expectations, and they ceaſed to will it's continuance. In this caſe, a mere incompatibility of temper, would be a ſufficient ground for a divorce. But to allow this, would be to offer a premium upon the univerſality of proſtitution; and to make the nuptials of mankind as tranſient as thoſe of brutes.

The diſpoſition of individuals is as various as their features. No two tempers can be preciſely ſimilar; and a difference in this reſpect, is no better argument for a divorce, than a difference of complexion. The tender aſſociations of familiar intercourſe, where marriage is entered into, with a ſenſe of it's religious obligations, ſoon wear away the diſcrepancies of the moſt diſcordant tempers; and ſmooth off the harſh incongruities of taſte and manners. Both parties will conſent to forego their mutual aſperities, by a mutual accommodation.

Whether we regard it in it's political importance, or it's ſubſerviency to ſocial and individual bliſs, the

marriage-tie cannot be conſidered as too ſacred. It is marriage which renovates the world. It is the trunk, from which germinate all the domeſtic charities, that bear the fruits of happineſs.

Thoſe who would diveſt matrimony of it's religious ſanctions, would ſtrip it of all it's moral, and even wither the bloom of it's phyſical attractions. It would ſoon ſink into a debaſed and brutal connection; a ſordid league for avarice or for luſt.

It is not the mere name or ceremony of marriage, that renders it ſacred. Every marriage, which is not contracted from a ſenſe of mutual eſteem, which is not ſublimed by the endearments of ſympathy, and hallowed by the ſpirit of piety, is vitally and eſſentially proſtitution. The only true and genuine marriage, is that which is an union of mind and ſoul, as well as appetite; not ſpringing from the inconſiderate tumult of paſſion, but the conſiderate tranquillity of eſteem; not volatile, but permanent; not exhaled from humour and whim, but combined with all the beſt affections of the heart; and faſtened on the conſcience, by the glorifying energies of religion.

In the brutes, there is nothing which can deſerve the the name of conjugal affection. Their union terminates with the impulſe of the moment. In man it is far otherwiſe.—In man, conjugal love aſſumes a moral complexion. A thouſand aſſociations, blend it with a thouſand captivations. It is refined by ſympathy; it is ſublimed by fancy; till, loſing half it's animal groſſneſs it reſembles the delicate intercourſe of purer ſpirits.

In man, the imagination, inſpired by the paſſion of love, adorns the beloved object with numberleſs attractions; and forms a picture of perfection incompatible with the frailties of humanity.—But the time, at laſt, comes when the firſt warm tranſports of ſenſibility yield to the calmer emotions; the conjugal tie, familiariſed, breaks the ſpell of the enchantreſs.

Then, when experience ſhades with traces of frailty the blameleſs picture which fancy drew,—then happy is it, if, when the firſt blaze of tranſport is over, it leave behind it, that bland warmth of mutual eſteem, which leads through life, at that medium of temperature, which is equally diſtant from rapturous fondneſs, and from negligent indifference.

The raviſhed inquietudes of ſenſation, and the extacies of imagination are too violent to be laſting; but that mutual eſteem which is ſpiritualiſed by the breath of religion, will ſurvive the gay illuſions of fancy; and, inſtead of being abated, will be increaſed, as time nips the bloom of youth, and the heart grows chill with the touch of age.—Nay, it is probable that the pure and genuine flame of affection, which identified the intereſts and the ſenſations of two hearts, on this earth, will ſhine for ever in a better country. Death will not diſſolve the true undiſſembled union of ſouls.—Hence, then, take comfort, thou wretched mourner, who art following to the grave one, who was long the fond companion of thy travel in the waſte of miſery!

Our Saviour ſaid, that, in heaven, they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are like the angels. The phyſical bonds of love will periſh in the grave; but it's moral bonds—the delicate energies of ſympathy—will be everlaſting.

As there are ſome affections which attach us to individuals, ſo there are others which connect us, by bonds of tenderneſs, with the great maſs of ſociety. As we

are ſenſible to the glow of filial, parental, conjugal and friendly love, ſo we ought to be alive to the patriotic affections, which incline our hearts to ſympathiſe with the welfare of the community, to which we belong, and the country, in which we were born.

Some have, indeed, thought that the heat of patriotiſm, which a good man feels for the welfare of his native country, ought to be extinguiſhed in the ſpirit of more comprehenſive patriotiſm, which attaches him to the univerſal welfare of his ſpecies; without any partial or peculiar concern for the people, among whom he was bred, or the country, in which he was born.

But, I think, that no man, unleſs he have wandered, from his very infancy, like a vagabond, over the earth, without ever taſting or communicating the comforts of domeſtic ſociety, can well overcome thoſe early aſſociations, which endear him to the fields of his youth; and which, as it were, aſſimilate his nature to the language, to the manners, and the intereſts of his native country. For that country can he refrain from burning with ſome ſparks of a peculiar fondneſs? Is ſuch a partiality criminal? Is it not rather a virtue, which aſſociation

produces, but which heaven approves? For, among every people, of every clime, whether barbarous or civilised, whether inhabiting ſpots of luxuriant fertility, or of eternal barrenneſs, the love of the "natale ſolum" has ever been a predominant paſſion: of which the extinction would cover the various regions of the earth with ſhades of melancholy, and dry up the perennial ſource of their intereſt, their captivations and their charms.* That philoſophy, therefore, appears to me

* The power of aſſociation, over the affections, will be ſeen in the inſtance which I am going to mention, from Captain Cooke's laſt voyage to the Pacific Ocean. On Captain Clerke's arrival at the town of St. Peter and St. Paul, in Kamſchatka, Mr. King, Mr. Webſter and others were diſpatched to the commanding officer, at Belcheretſk; on their way, they were hoſpitably entertained, at the little village of Karatchin. Whilſt they were dining, in a miſerable hut, the gueſts of abſolute ſtrangers, and at the extremity of the habitable globe, a ſolitary half-worn pewter ſpoon ſoon attracted their attention. "It's form," ſays the narrator, "was familiar to us; and the word London was ſtamped upon the back of it. It is impoſſible to expreſs the anxious hopes and tender remembrances this excited in us. Thoſe, who have been long abſent from their native country, will readily conceive what inexpreſſible pleaſure ſuch trifling incidents can give."

On the ſubject of aſſociation, I ſhall dwell a little longer. Moſt of our pleaſures are derived from this ſource. In the views of nature, many proſpects excite agreeable ſenſations, which have nothing beautiful in themſelves; and, for which, no other cauſe can be aſſigned, than that theſe proſpects bear a reſemblance to thoſe which were connected by us, in our infancy, with agreeable ſenſations. Theſe ſenſations were excited by cauſes

of a pernicious caſt, which would reduce the affections to an uniform level; which would make an Engliſhman, as zealous for the proſperity of France, or of China, or

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foreign to the beauty of the view itſelf; but which, in the lapſe of time, have been intimately blended with it, and become parts of it. Similar views then produce the very ſenſations, which originated from aſſociated ideas. The ſight of fields, which, in their form and poſition, reſemble thoſe in which our early days were ſpent, would inſpire us with delightful emotions; and, at firſt, without our knowing why; for, we ſhould not immediately recollect the ſimilitude. Ideas of pleaſure, having been aſſociated with particular forms, or with this or that diſpoſition of country, are ſubject to frequent revival, when the cauſes which firſt produced them are forgotten.—We generally attach the idea of beauty to ſmooth undulating ſurfaces; and the contemplation of them, ariſes, in the heart, feelings that pleaſe. The firſt pleaſures of men are excited by their mothers breaſt;—the agreeable ſenſations which the infant experiences in ſucking, are, afterwards, attached to the ſoftneſs, ſmoothneſs and whiteneſs of the milky fountain. His eyes feaſt on it with placid rapture; his little fingers move, in various directions, gently, over the ſwelling breaſt. Surfaces that have ſimilar ſpiral and waving lines, afterwards excite ſimilar emotions.—There is, perhaps, nothing either beautiful or ugly, but as it is aſſociated with ideas of pleaſure or averſion, or with circumſtances which have, ſome way or other, intereſted our feelings, or influenced our enjoyments.

A good-natured German, in a journey, which he made on foot, thro' ſeveral parts of England, ſays—"When I was paſt Bakewell, a place far inferior to Derby, I came by the ſide of a broad river, to a ſmall eminence, where a fine cultivated field lay before me. This field, all at once, made an indeſcribable and very pleaſing impreſſion on me; *which, at firſt, I could not account for; till I recollected having ſeen, in my childhood, near the village where I was educated, a ſituation ſtrikingly ſimilar to that now before me in England.* See Travels by C. P. Moritz. 12mo. Robinſons.—See likewiſe Zoonom. vol. i. 145.

Siberia, as for that of Britain; and extinguiſh the partial flame of all local ſympathies.

Patriotiſm, like extenſion, muſt begin at a point; but may be increaſed, by gradual diffuſion, till it becomes a philanthropy, that knows no limits than the limits of nature. But as the circulation near the heart is more warm, freſh and vigorous than at the extremities, ſo, every man's affection for his native country ought to be more fervent and vivid, than that philanthropic heat which may intereſt him in the happineſs of diſtant regions.

A good Chriſtian will be a citizen of his own country, before he will claim the too often affected appellation of a citizen of the world; a name frequently abuſed to diſguiſe a baſe inſenſibility to the beſt affections of the human heart.

But, though a good Chriſtian will glory in a partial fondneſs for his own country, ſtill he will feel a lively intereſt for the happineſs of other nations. He will love juſtice and benevolence even more than his country; and he will never conſent to violate theſe ſacred prin-

ciples, though, by the violation, he might increaſe her oppulence or her grandeur.

It is a very common notion, that kingdoms ſink in misfortunes, in proportion, as their neighbours riſe in proſperity.—Hence, that mean jealouſy and rivalry, that ſeparates and imbitters the great brotherhood of mankind. Hence, ſo much bloodſhed, and ſo many wars.—Nations do not conſider that they ought rather to rejoice at, than to lament the increaſe of each other's wealth and happineſs.

Proſperity is not confined to one ſingle channel; it has numerous channels, which communicate with and aſſiſt each other. The proſperity of our neighbours always tends, ſooner or later, to augment our own.

The want of that benevolence, which is of the true Chriſtian ſort, prevents ſtates as well as individuals from diſcerning their real and eſſential intereſt. Moſt nations thirſt, with the greedineſs of monopoliſts, for an excluſive commerce; of which they may prevent their neighbours from any participation of the advantages. But this is a deluſive policy, which promiſes great and pro-

duces little benefit. *For, it is for the good of mankind, that proſperity ſhould run in many channels; as the power of it's production is always increaſed, in proportion to the multiplication of it's ſources.*

Nations, at preſent, boaſt moſt loudly of turning the balance of trade againſt each other; but, I truſt that the time is approaching, when the rivalry of avarice ſhall be extinguiſhed; and kingdoms ſhall look for glory only in the rivalry of benevolence.

To enrich his native country, a good Chriſtian will never be an advocate for oppreſſing a weaker neighbour; he will ſcorn to carry fire and ſword, devaſtation and murder into a foreign kingdom, to promote the fancied glory or ſecurity of his own. A good Chriſtian will conſider war as murder, with an infinite aggravation of it's atrocity; and he will refuſe to unſheath the ſword, except in the ſingle caſe of the aggreſſions of tyranny, either from without or from within; and then he will cheerfully hazard his fortune, and ſhed his blood in the defence of his country, and for the preſervation of her liberties and her laws.

Such will be a good political Chriſtian; ſuch we may

without any impiety, imagine that Jeſus would have been,* were he living on earth, as a man, in the ſociety

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* Some divines have endeavoured to perſuade us, that the Author of Chriſtianity was an advocate for paſſive political ſervitude.—In the whole compaſs of the Evangelic memoirs, I know but one paſſage, which has any direct relation to the important topic of civil obedience.—The Jews having aſked Jeſus, whether it were lawful to give tribute unto Cæſar or not. He replied, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he ſaith unto them, Whoſe is this image and ſuperſcription? They ſay unto him, Cæſar's; then ſaith he unto them, *Render therefore unto Cæſar, the things that are Cæſar's; and unto God, the things that are God's.*" In the firſt place: "Render unto Cæſar, &c." means, give to Cæſar *his juſt dues*; but then this point remains to be conſidered. *What are the juſt dues of Cæſar?* And this queſtion is not to be determined by the arbitrary will of Cæſar, but by the conſiderations of religion, of juſtice and humanity. Were we to permit Cæſar to determine his own rights and prerogative, according to his own caprice, we give him a licenſe to trample on the ſacred rights of conſcience and of juſtice. This was not the intention of Jeſus; for he has qualified the obedience commanded on the firſt part of the ſentence, "Render, &c." by the reſtriction which is employed in the laſt,—"*but* unto God the things that are God's."

A good Chriſtian will cheerfully pay tribute, to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, honour to whom honour; but if obedience be demanded of him, in caſes where he cannot conſcientiouſly pay it, he will courageouſly reſiſt the tyranny that demands it. He will "not fear him who can kill the body, but him who can deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell."

Man was not made by heaven for a ſlave. This truth is written, by the hand of God, on every man's heart; and it is a palpable and ſelf-evident propoſition to every one, whoſe mind has not been totally imbruted by long continued habits of obſequiouſneſs to the ſcourge of ſlavery, and the laſh of oppreſſion.

of men. In his character, we meet with ſeveral traits of that national attachment which is the eſſence of patriotiſm. In Luke xix. we read, that Jeſus, deſcending from the Mount of Olives, wept when he beheld the city, and the temple which was the boaſt of every Jew, and the glory of his native land; but which he knew would, in a few years, preſent only a melancholy ſcene of ruin and devaſtation. This thought rouſed an exclamation of patriotic ſympathy. "Would thou had known," ſaid he, "even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!—But now they are hid from thine eyes!" The ſtorm of divine fury, which was gathering againſt his country, he ſaw; and he ſtruggled in vain to avert, by reformation and repentance. His countrymen were blind to the danger, and inſenſible to his exhortations. But Jeſus, unable to bring the Jews to a ſerious ſenſe of the calamities, which were impending over them, and to open their eyes to the light of the goſpel of immortality, inſtead of execrating, with bitterneſs, lamented with tenderneſs their blindneſs and depravity. "O Jeruſalem," ſaid he, "O Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth

her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matt. xxiii. With artleſs but impaſſioned eloquence, he mourned over the wilful obſtinacy of his beloved city. He diſcovers the fervency of a patriot, whoſe affections centre in the welfare of his country; and whoſe ſoul breathes the warmeſt wiſhes for it's proſperity.

A good Chriſtian will be a ſtrenuous defender of public virtue and public piety. He will regard the decay of morality and of religion, as the greateſt calamity that can befal his country; and as the ſure indication of a declining empire. He, who, in a public ſtation, can countenance the leaſt relaxation of public integrity, or abet the abaſement of the national character, by any acts of injuſtice or of inhumanity, by the violation of any one ſocial or ſacred tie, is no Chriſtian, but an enemy to Chriſtianity. A good Chriſtian will glow with an honeſt zeal, to preſerve the religion which he venerates from any contaminating mixture—from hypocriſy and from bigotry—from that foppery of worſhip, which mocks the Supreme Intelligence—and from that extravagance and enthuſiaſm, which conceals the light of heaven under clouds and darkneſs.

Chriſtianity has been frequently, though I truſt undeſignedly, injured by thoſe who are ſometimes falſely ſtiled Evangelical preachers; who, loſing ſight of the rational practice of the goſpel, talk of nothing but what they call it's doctrines; but of which, it is plain, that as they know nothing themſelves, they cannot make them clear to others. By pretending to explain thoſe things, of which they have no diſtinct and definite ideas, they are betrayed into the groſſeſt inconſiſtencies, and often the moſt ludicrous abſurdities. The ſublime morality which Jeſus inculcated, and which impreſſes the ſpirit of charity by the moſt awful ſanctions, they paſs over in contemptuous ſilence; while they vainly labour to *unfold the dark covering of the ark* of the Chriſtian myſteries. *

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* The turn of theſe expreſſions is borrowed from a Mſſ. of Chatterton, in which he makes the fictitious Rowley offer to refute "at St. Mark's croſs, in the church-yard of St. Mary Redcleff," in Briſtol, the heretical notions of John a Milverton, who ſeems to have embraced the doctrines of Socinus. The paſſage I allude to, is as follows: "It is in vain for the wit of man, to pretend to unfold the dark covering of the ark of the Trinity; leaſt, like thoſe of old, he be ſtricken dead and his reaſon loſt, by breathing in an element too fine and ſubtle for his groſs nature."

I ſhall here ſay ſomething on the ſubject of the Pſeudo-Rowley,—a ſubject to which I have given much attention; as is well known to my

As the pretended Evangelical preachers affect to preach nothing but Jeſus, it is ſtrange that they ſhould ſo

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friends; and particularly my much eſteemed friend, Charles Gower, M. D. of Oriel College; a gentleman, diſtinguiſhed by the integrity of his conduct, the openneſs and kindneſs of his heart, and the diverſified copi ouſneſs of his erudition.

Thomas Chatterton, one of the moſt extraordinary perſonages that has appeared in the preſent century, was born at Briſtol, Nov. 20, 1752. His predilection for antiquities was excited in his childhood. He ſeems, likewiſe, when almoſt an infant, to have imbibed a paſſion for fame, and a thirſt for diſtinction. Traces of this were viſible in his earlieſt intercourſe.

He always ambitiouſly ſought the poſt of pre-eminence among his play-fellows. He was not willing to conſider them as his equals; he would have them his ſervants. How often might the dawn of character be obſerved in the ſports and amuſements of youth?

In the mind of young Chatterton, the love of pre-eminence was an impetuous and ruling paſſion. It imparted an unwearied activity to the energies of his mind; and inſpired him with vigor, to reſiſt that laſſitude which ariſes from inceſſant exertion. In his meals, he uſed an almoſt aſcetic abſtinence; and he ſlept but little. The greater part of every night he devoted to the multiform occupations of genius; his unquenchable paſſion for fame almoſt enabled him to counteract the ordinary calls of nature for repoſe; and without a conſiderable portion of which common mortals would ſoon expire.

To the early thirſt of Chatterton for diſtinction, and which, more fortunately for the world than for himſelf, took a literary direction, I attribute his forgery of the poems attributed to Rowley. He well knew that any poems, appearing in his own name, and as the productions of a pariſh-boy, would have excited but little attention; and he certainly could not hope that they would cauſe his reputation to emerge from the boſom of obſcurity. But he knew that the publication of poems, ſaid to

rarely recommend to the imitation and the practice of of their followers, the ſtriking lineaments of his charac-

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have been written in the fifteenth century, and with all the harmony of numbers, which is perceptible in the writers of the eighteenth, would be a literary phenomenon, well calculated to excite general curioſity. Even in Briſtol, where the heart is too uſually dormant to any emotions, but to thoſe of gain or of voluptuouſneſs, a few ſparks of curioſity and of intereſt were elicited; and Chatterton found the ſhadow of patronage (alas, it was but the ſhadow!) in a ſurgeon and a pewterer.

Another motive, which operated to the production of this wonderful forgery, was the deſire of the young author to gratify his vanity, by impoſing on the learned world. This he did moſt effectually. The garb of antiquity, which he aſſumed, ſeems to have deceived ſome of the moſt profound antiquaries; and the genuineneſs of the poems, might, to this day, have remained a matter of ambiguity, if the forgery of Chatterton had not been indiſputably eſtabliſhed by the taſte of Wharton, and the preciſe and penetrating erudition of Tyrwhit.

The moſt remarkable circumſtance, in the life of Chatterton, is the early maturity of his mind. His intellect, unlike the intellect of moſt men, does not ſeem to have attained it's greatneſs by a ſlow and gradual, but a rapid and almoſt inſtantaneous expanſion.——Of that taſte, whoſe divine irradiations are diſpenſed to none but the man of genius,—of that taſte, which is a ſubtle and delicate emanation from a ſound judgment, quick perceptions and a vigorous intelligence, and which beſtows the power of diſcerning beauties that are inviſible to vulgar apprehenſions, and of forming combinations which ſtrike univerſally by their juſtneſs or dazzle by their ſplendour,—Chatterton poſſeſſed a more than common ſhare, at a premature period.

At the age of ſixteen, he produced the tragedy of Ælla; in which there are the marks of a mind vigorous in purſuit, powerful in combination and delicate in ſelection.—In the peruſal of Ælla, who, that can ſympathiſe with the varied agitations of the human breaſt, can refrain from expe-

ter, and the moſt prominent features of his doctrine! In a cant unmeaning jargon, they talk much of vital

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riencing alternate emotions of ſoftneſs and of magnanimity—now melted by the tenderneſs of Birtha, now elevated by the heroiſm of Ælla? In the parting ſcene, which is ably managed, the ſpirit of the warrior predominates over that of the lover; while Birtha, an exquiſitely winning pourtrait of female frailty, is carried reſiſtleſsly down the ſtream of her ſenſations.—The ſong of the minſtrel is remarkable for it's ſimplicity, it's ſweetneſs and pathos.

"*Come with a corne-coppe and thorne,*
Drayne mie heartys blodde awaie;
Lyfe and all yttes goode I ſcorne,
Daunce bie nete, or feaſte by daie.
My love ys dedde,
Gon to hys death-bedde
All under the wyllow tree.
&c. &c."

In "the Fragment of Godwin," the chorus of Freedom would not have diſgraced the lyre of Gray. In the battle of Haſtings, amid a profuſion of ſimilies and metaphors, the exuberance of a juvenile imagination, there are examples of the true ſublime. "The Ballad of Charity" cannot be read without tender emotions; for imagination inſtantly ſuggeſts that the wretchedneſs of the poet, was ſignified in that of the pilgrim.

To form a true eſtimate of the genius of Chatterton, we muſt not forget that the beauties of his poetry, are leſs reſplendent, than they otherwiſe would be, from the perverted and antiquated diction, and the often barbarous and incongruous idiom, by which they are obſcured. Many of the words, uſed by Chatterton, were the coinage of his own fancy; others are diſtorted from their common and regular acceptation in ancient writers; and the elegance of modern phraſeology is blended with the factitious incruſtations of antiquity.

faith; but they ſay little of vital benevolence; without which faith can be but a ſound. How different their

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The ſenſations which we experience in peruſing ſome of the beſt of our ancient poets, are not unlike thoſe which will be felt by a man of a cultivated ſenſibility, who walks in a Gothic aiſle, when the rays of the moon are gleaming on the chambers of the dead; but thoſe which we imbibe from the poetry of Chatterton, though they have leſs ſolemnity, have ſomething more of ſoftneſs, as if we were ſitting in an ancient choir, and and were now inſpired by the grandeur of the ſcene—now melted by the ſweetneſs of the harmony.——The genuine poet, is known by the degree of energy, with which he can influence our ſenſations, and make them reſpond to his maſter volition; who powerfully touches the chords of our hearts, and deprives us of the poſſeſſion of ourſelves. A ſecond rate poet only plays about the heart; but a poet of the firſt order, like Shakeſpear in many paſſages and like Chatterton in a few, ſtorms every avenue of the ſoul; and makes us glow with enthuſiaſm, or ſadden with deſpair.

The genius of Chatterton languiſhed in the atmoſphere of Briſtol; his productions were not to the taſte of the merchants, who were wallowing in the luxury of wealth; while the poet was ſuffered to feel the piercing anguiſh of penury and of ſcorn. He, accordingly, accepted the offers of ſome London Bookſellers, who invited him to the metropolis. In April, 1770, he left his native city; glowing, probably, with thoſe gay illuſions of fame and fortune, with which hope is continually cheating the burning fancy of youth. But the fond expectations of poor Chatterton were never realiſed; and diſtracted with the recollection of paſt neglect, and the proſpect of future miſery, he took poiſon on the evening of the 24th of Auguſt, 1770, of which he expired the next morning, when he wanted almoſt three months to complete his eighteenth year.

Far be it from me to become the apologiſt of ſelf-murder;—but I muſt ſay, that when diſtreſſed genius (genius, whoſe ſenſations are ſo tremblingly delicate, *and which feels miſery with ten times the poignancy of ordinary mortals*), in the bitterneſs of anguiſh, ſhuts out the hope of mercy

diſcourſes from the diſcourſes of Jeſus! The inſtructions of Jeſus, combine the pureſt morals, with calm and ſober but ſolemn devotion. They teach love as the eſſential principle of piety. They do not found ſalvation, on the ſhadowy baſe of a faith in doctrines which are inſcrutable to the wit of man, and equally obſcure to the ignorant and the wiſe.

Mr. Wilberforce, in his View of Chriſtianity, ſeems to ſuppoſe, that a ſteady and undoubting conviction of the inborn and radical corruption of the human heart, is the foundation-ſtone of righteouſneſs. In the 12mo. edit. of 1797. p. 18. Mr. Wilberforce ſays of man,

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by becoming it's own deſtroyer, thoſe ought, in ſome meaſure, to ſhare the guilt of the crime, who refuſed the patronage, by which it might have been prevented. Horatio! thou too art deſcended to the duſt of thy fathers, or I ſhould be tempted to ſay that which would awaken thy remorſe!!!

Mr. Warton has obſerved, that Chaucer is like a genial day, in an Engliſh ſpring; but Chatterton appears to reſemble a meteor ſeen in a ſummer ſky; which paſſes away too ſoon for all it's deviations to be noted, or all it's luſtre to be aſcertained.

To this note I ſhall only add, that, in the year 1790, I ſaw the mother and ſiſter of Chatterton. The mother was very infirm and ſickly; the ſiſter kept a day-ſchool, and had, I think, one little daughter. They were in indigent circumſtances!

that he is "tainted with ſin, not ſlightly and ſuperficially, but radically and to the very core." And in p. 32. he ſays, "It is here" (*viz.* in the doctrine of the original and innate corruption of mankind): "never let it be forgotten, *that our foundation muſt be laid; otherwiſe our ſuperſtructure, whatever we may think of it, will one day or other prove tottering and inſecure.*"

It is ſurely ſtrange, that our hopes of ſalvation muſt be precarious and inſecure, before we have debaſed our natural ſenſe of juſtice ſo far, as to give a cordial aſſent to the doctrine of imputed ſin. Can any man, in his ſenſes, and the exerciſe of whoſe underſtanding is not palſied by the dwarfiſh cowardice of ſuperſtition, acquieſce in the notion of inbred and inalienable guilt? Does ſin conſiſt, not in ſinning, but in paſſing our mother's womb?

Our mere deſcent from Adam, does not make us ſinful; nor, *till we have ſinned in our own perſons*, can we be worthy objects of divine puniſhment. That, as the deſcendants of Adam, we are born under a curſe, I can ſafely allow; but what is the curſe?—Not, ſurely,

the curſe of eternal damnation, or of imputed ſin, but the curſe of being mortal.—We are all ſubject to death, which we might not have been, if Adam had not ſinned. "Duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return," was the curſe paſſed upon Adam, on account of his tranſgreſſion; and this curſe, which was paſſed on him, is entailed on his lateſt poſterity. Adam, being made mortal, could not certainly tranſmit immortal energies to thoſe who came after him.

Let us now conſider the law, to which Adam was ſubject in Paradiſe. He was made immortal on certain conditions; and theſe conditions were to him a law, which he was bound not to diſobey. "Of every tree in the garden," ſaid the Lord to Adam, "thou mayeſt freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it; for, in the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die."

As Adam was threatened with death, in caſe he eat of the forbidden fruit, we muſt neceſſarily infer that if he had not eaten of it, he would not have died.—But he had no ſooner tranſgreſſed the covenant, by adhering to which he might have remained immortal, and exempt from

pain and diſeaſe, than he became mortal, and ſubject to thoſe pains and miſeries, and various bodily infirmities which are eſſential to a ſtate of mortality, and which, by waſting the power of the body, haſten it's diſſolution. —The conſequences, therefore, in which the diſobedience of Adam involved his poſterity, are theſe;—pain, diſeaſe, and death!

The ſentence of eternal damnation, was not only not paſſed upon Adam and his deſcendants, but, at the very moment that the ſentence of death and the decree of mortality was pronounced againſt them, a hope was held out to them;—a hope which was, indeed, at firſt, faint and dubious, but which gradually grew clearer, as the ſtar of Jacob approached the horizon,—that the Almighty would, under the influence of the ſecond Adam, reſtore the ſons of men to thoſe immortal privileges, which they would have poſſeſſed, if the firſt Adam had not ſinned.

"I will," ſaid the Lord to the ſerpent, Gen. iii. 15. "put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed; and it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel." Here was an intimation,

dark indeed and myſterious, but, not without gleams of ſolace, given to our firſt parents—that they ſhould hereafter, in the perſon of one of their deſcendants, puniſh the ſerpent, by whoſe guile they had been betrayed; and that the wound, under which they languiſhed, ſhould not be incurable. This is not obſcurely ſignified, by the wound itſelf being repreſented as a bruiſe only upon the heel, and not on any vital part.——Thus we ſee that Adam was puniſhed for his tranſgreſſion by temporary ills, and by death, which is itſelf only a temporary ill; but that the conſolatary proſpect of a life after death, and a repeal of the ſentence paſſed on him was dimly ſhadowed forth to him.

How then can it be ſaid, with the leaſt ſhow of truth, that we are by nature, and as it were, in right of our deſcent from Adam, heirs of eternal wrath and worthy of eternal miſery? For we ſee that the ſentence paſſed on Adam himſelf was nothing more than death temporal, and ſhort-lived miſery.

If the conſequences of Adam's tranſgreſſion are entailed on his poſterity, thoſe conſequences may be ſummed up in the mortality of our bodies. "In Adam all

die;" as the Apoſtle ſaid; but to pretend that we are vile and guilty in the ſight of God, merely from having been born of Adam (a thing, by the by, which we had no means of preventing), is to aſſert what is as repugnant to Scripture as it is to reaſon. It ſeems, indeed, a downright abſurdity, to ſuppoſe, with Mr. W. that we are, by nature, neceſſarily and inherently ſinners; that ſin has been incorporated in every drop of blood that flows in the heart, and in every fibre that conſtitutes the tiſſue of the human frame.

Sin, means a wilful violation of the laws of God; and is the voluntary perverſion of that faculty which enables us to diſtinguiſh between good and evil. Moral guilt, implies a concomitant conſciouſneſs of duty; and where this conſciouſneſs is not, as it certainly is not either in infants or ideots, there can be no guilt. Moral depravity, ſignifies depraved affections and habits of acting; and *which are not innate but acquired.*

To teach people that they are morally and eſſentially guilty, before they have committed ſin, and doomed to eternal puniſhment, before they have done any thing to deſerve any puniſhment at all, can only tend to

give the moſt confuſed notions of moral virtue, to deſtroy the vital ſpirit of human rectitude, and to excite the moſt unworthy ideas of the Supreme Being;—as of a malicious Demon, bringing myriads of ſentient creatures into exiſtence, on purpoſe to torture them to everlaſting ages.

Had the doctrine—that men are by nature ſinners, and that guilt is radical and innate in every heart, been an eſſential part of Chriſtian knowledge, our Saviour would, certainly, have inſiſted on it, as a preliminary to ſalvation; and taught it as the rudiments of immortality. He would have repreſented it as the only rock of Chriſtian ſafety, inſtead of conferring eternal life on thoſe who kept the commandments. Matt. xix. 17. In none of his diſcourſes, did Jeſus inculcate to his followers, the neceſſity of a conviction in the original and radical corruption of human nature, as that only groundwork of piety, "without which, any ſuperſtructure that we might raiſe *would be tottering and inſecure.*" Jeſus ſeems everywhere to conſider men as beings endued with paſſion and with reaſon, and ſuſceptible of good as well as of evil.

The firſt words in which both Jeſus and the Apoſtles ſeem to have begun their preaching, were an exhortation to repentance. "Repent ye," was their ordinary exordium. Now, repentance muſt refer to acquired, not imputed guilt,—that guilt to which the will conſented, not that to which it could not be acceſſary. It would have been madneſs to require men to repent of that ſin which they had no concern in willing; and which was committed many ages anterior to their poſſeſſion of the faculty of volition.

"I am not," ſaid Jeſus, Matt. ix. 13. "come to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance." This implies that there were ſome who needed no repentance. Had Jeſus been an advocate for the doctrine of radical and inherent depravity, he would not have acknowledged that any were righteous; ſince, in that caſe, all muſt have been equally tainted, if not with perſonal, at leaſt, with imputed guilt. When it was alledged as a charge againſt Jeſus, that he ate with publicans and ſinners. "They that be whole," ſaid he, "need no phyſician but they that are ſick." Matt. ix. 12. This paſſage intimates, that that corruption which Mr. Wilberforce deems univerſal, and innate in the whole maſs of man-

kind, was only partial to individuals; and, by it's being repreſented under the image of a ſickneſs, we may ſuppoſe that Jeſus conſidered it as rather accidental and acquired, than innate and unavoidable. He ſeems to have thought the corruption of man rather a ſecondary than a primary diſeaſe; rather a ſickneſs at the extremities than "*at the core;*" rather a local malady, than a total gangrene.

That Jeſus did not eſteem guilt innate in man, we may, likewiſe, plainly gather from the conciſe but impreſſive eulogy which he pronounced on the *innocence* of little children. "Of *ſuch* is the kingdom of God." He makes the ſpotleſs innocence of infancy emblematic of the poſſeſſors of the happy manſions. If men are born, as Jeſus evidently thought and openly declared, in a ſtate of guiltleſs innocence, the notion of imputed ſin is *a mere chimæra*, which ought no longer to be ſuffered to throw it's bewildering and terrific gloom over the ſerene beauty of the Chriſtian ſyſtem. *

* I have dwelt a good deal on this ſubject; becauſe I am of opinion that thouſands and thouſands have been prevented from embracing Chriſtianity by the imprudence of divines, in inſiſting, with ſo much vehemence,

Let it then, henceforth, paſs into the ſilence of oblivion, along with the numerous corruptions of the true goſpel by bigotry and ſuperſtition. Let us boldly, but reverently, diſcreetly and ſoberly, remove this and other incruſtations of time, of ignorance and prejudice from the ſyſtem of Jeſus; and let us diſplay the genuine and unvitiated ſpirit of his religion to the world;—of that religion which is to be found in a fair and liberal interpretation of his diſcourſes and his actions. This ſeems the only way of determining with preciſion what is, and what is not, Chriſtianity.—I am well aware that, in delivering theſe ſentiments, I ſhall render myſelf obnoxious to thoſe who love to range, with a certain confuſedneſs of mind, in the dark perplexities of myſtery, and forſake the guidance of reaſon, in the coverts of ſome inexplicable doctrine.

I do not deny but that texts which ſeem to favour the doctrine of imputed ſin, may be drawn from the

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on the neceſſity of aſſenting to the doctrine of imputed ſin—a doctrine which would found Chriſtian morality on a frail and periſhable foundation—a doctrine which militates againſt the general tenor of Scripture, and which is contrary to the moſt enlarged notions of the Divine Goodneſs.

writings of St. Paul; but, at the ſame time, I could produce from the ſame writings paſſages of an oppoſite tendency; and while the epiſtles of that apoſtle are ſo little underſtood and ſo liable to inferences, which, perhaps, the Apoſtle himſelf never thought of, I think it moſt ſafe, as well as wiſe, in conſidering any diſputed point of doctrine, to confine our attention *ſolely and excluſively to thoſe points of doctrine which Jeſus himſelf plainly and unequivocally ſanctioned by his authority.*

It cannot be denied, that the epiſtles of St. Paul are interſperſed with many uſeful precepts for the regulation of life and conduct, in the various relations of ſocial intercourſe. He ſometimes applies the general rules of our Saviour to ſpecific duties. He details the relative obligations of huſband and wife, maſter and ſervant;—and it ought never to be forgotten, that he has pronounced (1 Cor. xiii.) one of the moſt comprehenſive, beautiful and ſublime eulogies on charity, that was ever uttered. Regarding it merely as a ſpecimen of human eloquence, it may vie with the fineſt paſſages in the fineſt productions of Greece or of Rome.

But rules for the conduct of life, or counſels of univerſal application form, comparatively, but a ſmall part of the writings of Paul. They are, like rays, thinly ſcattered through an expanſe of myſterious darkneſs. The major part of his epiſtles is filled with the abſtruſe diſcuſſions of Rabbinical learning; or relates to queſtions which are, at preſent, of more curioſity than importance; though, in his time, they interrupted the harmony of the Chriſtian community, and were debated with eagerneſs, as points which were connected with an eternal intereſt. But time has both leſſened their intereſt and darkened their meaning.

The Epiſtle to the Romans is bewildered with the polemical Chriſtianity of that day; and turns on points which were agitated, with no little vehemence, not only between the unbelieving Jews and the Judaizing Chriſtians, but between the latter and the Gentile converts.

The obſcurity of the writings of St. Paul is likewiſe increaſed by the intricacy of his ſtyle; by the long parentheſes, which ſometimes interrupt the ſucceſſion of his ideas; and, at others, ſeems to perplex and confuſe the order of his arguments. He likewiſe ſo often reaſons

In the perſon of his adverſary, that it is probable, that notions have often been imputed to Paul, which he rather combated than defended. He ſeems likewiſe, at times, to labour with myſterious meanings; and which he failed in developing with ſufficient perſpicuity. He was of the ſect of the Phariſees, who were wont to allegoriſe on the literal ſenſe of Scripture. His writings have undoubtedly ſome tincture of Cabbaliſtical refinement; and it may be doubted whether they do not occaſionally glimmer with a ray of Grecian philoſophy.

The character of Paul was diſtinguiſhed by intrepidity and energy. It had no littleneſſes, no minute or dwarfiſh features;—all is force, grandeur and ſublimity. He was impatient in purſuit; and indefatigable in exertion. Diſdaining obſtacles, they rather accelerated than retarded his progreſs. He reſembled Cæſar, as characteriſed by Lucan:—

"Nil factum reputans dum quid ſupereſſet agendum."

Previous to his converſion, he was a fierce and inexorable, but a conſcientious enemy to Chriſtianity. Acts xxvi. Attached, even to bigotry, to the rites of the

Moſaic law, he exhibited an implacable rage againſt the diſciples of Jeſus. Not content with perſecuting them at Jeruſalem, his reſtleſs ſpirit purſued them to other cities, whither they had fled for ſafety. Acts xxvi.

The honeſt zeal of Paul was not abated by his converſion; it's direction only was altered. It flowed in a different channel, but with equal impetuoſity. Of that religion, againſt which, he had gone to Damaſcus, breathing threatnings and ſlaughter, he became the undaunted, the indefatigable and unſhaken advocate.

His natural ferocity was tempered by the gentle ſpirit of his new maſter. He no longer gave way to the intemperate ebullition of his paſſions; he did not thirſt for the blood of the unbelieving Jews, as he had formerly done, for that of the believing Chriſtians. He exhibited to the world an illuſtrious example of Chriſtian piety, dignified by the greatneſs of it's exertions, and the magnanimity of it's ſufferings; and he ſhewed how the moſt ſublime feelings of devotion are compatible with the diligence of induſtry, and with the ordinary occupations of life.

The prudent management of Paul was evinced in bringing that heterogeneous maſs, which formed the firſt Chriſtian ſocieties, into a benevolent union. Both the Jew and the Gentile converts were polluted by a thouſand diverſe ſuperſtitions and prejudices; and which muſt have oppoſed obſtacles to their reciprocal friendſhip, which nothing but great ability, combined with great moderation, great temper and perſeverance, aſſiſted by the divine influence, could have ſurmounted.

Setting out on his miſſion to convert the Gentile world—what a dreary and tremendous proſpect lay before him! Accumulated dangers preſſed on every ſide. —He had prejudices to vanquiſh; animoſities to ſoften; he had to elude ſecret treachery and open force; he had to contend with the machinations of the crafty and with the violence of the powerful.—But from theſe difficulties he did not ſhrink, either on account of their variety, their multitude or their danger. He ſaw the grave before him; but he beheld the ſtar of Jacob riſing beyond it's confines.

Death was to him an object of hope and of exultation; but he did not defy it's terrors, like the ambitious en-

thuſiaſt, impatient for the parade of martyrdom, or becauſe it promiſed the fading laurels of poſthumous fame, but welcomed it's approach becauſe he knew that it would bring him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

But while I am happy to pay the pious tribute of unfeigned homage tc the illuſtrious Apoſtle of the Gentiles, I muſt ſtill adhere to this opinion, which I have entertained almoſt ever ſince I have been able to exert the faculty of reflection,—that all the Chriſtianity with which it is neceſſary for us to be acquainted, is contained, in the Four Goſpels and Acts. The ſame opinion ſeems to have been held by a great and profound theologian. * "I have a ſtrong perſuaſion," ſays Lardner, "that the *goſpel was plain at firſt. It is contained in the Four Goſpels and Acts, which are plain books.* If Chriſtianity be not plain now, I apprehend it muſt be our own fault ſome how or other."—The fault appears to me to be this—that we do not ſufficiently confine our attention to the Goſpels, and particularly to the diſcourſes of Jeſus, which comprehend

* Dr. Lardner. See his Works, vol. i. Lxxxviii.

every neceſſary article of faith or of practice. Inſtead of endeavouring to render Chriſtianity plain, too many divines wilfully perplex it with ſubtleties. They rather labour to puzzle the underſtanding "*with queſtions and ſtrifes of words*," than to inform it with that practical wiſdom, "which maketh wiſe unto ſalvation."

The diſcourſes of Jeſus, which we ought never to loſe ſight of, when we are diſcuſſing any doctrinal or practical points of Chriſtianity, combine the pureſt morals with calm and ſober, but ſolemn, devotion. They teach love, as the eſſential principle of piety. They do not found ſalvation on the ſhadowy baſe of a faith in doctrines, which are inſcrutable to the wit of man, and equally obſcure to the ignorant and the wiſe.

The divine author of Chriſtianity, inſtead of wrapping holineſs in myſtery, and evaporating practical goodneſs in the flames of enthuſiaſm,* turned the atten-

* The pretended Evangelical preachers, who have found a patron and diſciple in Mr. Wilberforce, endeavour to lay what they imagine the foundation ſtone of righteouſneſs, by convincing their followers of their univerſal, inbred and radical corruption. An implicit aſſent to this dogma, they inculcate as the rudiments of religion.—Before they cheer their vota-

tion of his followers to active beneficence; and inculcated that vital morality, which ſeeks the favour of heaven by increaſing the happineſs of man.

All the miracles of Jeſus, as far as they can be objects of human imitation, are leſſons of practical goodneſs. The power by which they were effected, will be

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ries with any glad tidings, they take uncommon pains to convince them that the guilt of Adam has eaten into the very cores of their hearts, that they are ſinful creatures, and merit, by the deſtinies of nature, eternal damnation. When their diſciples have ſo far abandoned the uſe of their reaſon as to be immerſed over head and ears in the abſurdity of this doctrine, which they take care to ſet forth in every image of horror which ſuperſtition, hypocriſy and folly, reciprocally operating on each other, can ſuggeſt; they then teach the ſubmiſſive novice, to take refuge in "a *ſaving faith*;" as, in Popiſh countries, the vileſt miſcreants are (or rather *were*) often invited to elude the purſuit of juſtice in the walls of the ſanctuary. On the ſubject of this "*ſaving faith*," the miſnamed Evangelical preachers always labour to ſublime the ſenſations of their hearers to a degree of effervescing tranſport and enthuſiaſm, far beyond the temperature of common ſenſe and of moral obſervance. Raiſed to a pitch of rapture, they imagine that they have nothing more to do than to graſp the crown of glory, though they have, perhaps, neglected every habit of goodneſs, and all the benign graces of Chriſtian benevolence, to which it is appended. Thus do theſe men—the wolves in ſheeps' cloathing—impoſe upon the credulity of the illiterate and unthinking part of mankind; and they are often greedily liſtened to by others, who, *not liking the pains of acquiring moral habits, wiſh to get to heaven with the leaſt trouble.* They, therefore, enter with alacrity on the cheap and commodious way of "*ſaving faith.*"

for ever beyond our reach; but we may, without preſumption, aſpire to catch the ſpirit of beneficence, that prompted their execution. They tell us, in unequivocal language, to ſympathiſe with wretchedneſs in all it's varieties.

If we cannot raiſe the dead man from the bier, can we not adminiſter conſolation to the dying, and ſmooth their paſſage to the grave? If we cannot make the lame to walk or the blind to ſee, ſtill life preſents us with ſufficient opportunities of doing good. Is there not a widow or an orphan left among us? Are we acquainted with none whoſe ſtrength is waſting away in ſickneſs? with none, who have felt the rude hand of adverſity, and, in whoſe eyes, the ray of hope has been extinguiſhed by misfortune?

In the checquered ſorrows of life, in the melancholy viciſſitudes of ſuffering humanity, how many opportunities has the heart of being kind, and the hand of being bountiful? And yet, how often, in a fit, perhaps, of ſullenneſs or diſdain, in a moment of cold indifference, or of voluptuous ſelfiſhneſs, do we ſuffer theſe opportunities to paſs unheeded by us?—But theſe are oppor-

tunities which are more precious than any thing of mere temporal eſtimation, as they are connected with an immortal intereſt; and ought to be regarded as the means which Heaven, whoſe wiſdom may be traced in all it's apparently motley and fortuitous diſpenſations, deſigns to train up man for a ſtate of eternal bleſſedneſs, by habits of love, of gratitude and every tender ſympathy.

The majority of the parables of Jeſus, of which ſome are not more remarkable for uſefulneſs of inference, than for genuine beauty of compoſition, are of a practical tendency. The ſeveral parables of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xvi. of the Phariſee and the Publican, Luke xviii. of the rich man, who laid up a treaſure for himſelf, and was not rich towards God, Luke xii. of the indigent father and the undutiful ſon, Luke xv. of the merciful maſter and the hard-hearted ſervant, Matt. xviii. of the good Samaritan, Luke x.—all theſe parables inculcate various branches of piety,—of a piety not enthuſiaſtic, vain and illuſory, but fruitful, ſober, intelligible and ſuited to the purpoſes of common life. They tend to ſublime the narrow and ſelfiſh feelings;

and to widen, around the individual, the horizon of mercy and of charity.

The nature of our redemption, by Jeſus, has been a ſubject of much diſpute among Chriſtians. Some have entertained ſuch high notions of it's efficacy, as to ſuppoſe that no works which we can do, can at all conduce to our ſalvation.

This doctrine is pregnant with infinite miſchief: and were it univerſally received, would be fatal to the intereſts of juſtice and benevolence. But it is abhorrent both to Scripture* and to reaſon.

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* "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice;" (the voice of the ſon of man;) "and ſhall come forth;—they that *have done good* unto the reſurrection of life, and they that *have done evil* unto the reſurrection of damnation." John v. 28, 29.

In St. Matt. xxv. Jeſus makes charity the principal ground of acceptance, at the day of Judgment. Knowing the indolent reluctance of many readers to turn to any book that is not before them, and, particularly, when that book happens to be the holy Scriptures, I ſhall make no apology for tranſcribing the whole paſſage to which I allude.

"When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory;—And before him ſhall be gathered all nations: and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from the goats: And he ſhall

There is another opinion, that we are to be made immortal and happy by works only; and without any reference to the conciliatory influence of divine love, manifeſted in the perſon, and energetically operating in the

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ſet his ſheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then ſhall the King ſay unto thoſe on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.—Then ſhall the righteous anſwer, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirſty, and gave thee drink? When ſaw we thee a ſtranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when ſaw we thee ſick or in priſon, and came unto thee? And the King ſhall anſwer, and ſay unto them, Verily, I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one *of the leaſt of theſe, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* —Then ſhall he ſay, alſo, unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat? I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. Then ſhall they alſo anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungered, or athirſt, or a ſtranger, or naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and did not miniſter unto thee? Then ſhall he anſwer them, ſaying, Verily, I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye did it not unto one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me. And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment; but the righteous into life eternal."———No part of Scripture is more diſtinct and definite than this is. It admits of no equivocations; it is ſo clear that he "who runs may read;" and it deſerves the ſerious conſideration of thoſe perſons, who, truſting to the enthuſiaſtic fumes of imagination, think that there is a ſafer way to heaven than that of benevolence.

atonement of Jeſus. The truth, in this caſe, as in many others, ſeems to be placed between the extremes of the oppoſite opinions. It appears to me, that of the eternal life which the Scriptures promiſe to mankind, the mediatorial ſacrifice of Chriſt is the eſſential cauſe, and benevolence the qualifying habit.

Immortal happineſs is the free gift of God; it is not a debt paid to juſtice nor a tribute to merit. Nor is it a forced gift. We may either accept it or refuſe it. If we accept it, we muſt prove our acceptance an act of rational choice, and, at the ſame time, of grateful remembrance, by conforming to the conditions to which it is appended.

Eternal happineſs is a covenanted mercy. If we will enter life, we muſt keep the commandments; we muſt live in obedience to the precepts of the goſpel: but ſtill this obedience does not, in the leaſt degree, merit immortality. It is no equivalent, no ſatisfaction paid to the Almighty for ſo high a privilege. This ſtill remains the free-will offering of divine mercy, influenced by divine love.

The neceſſity of obedience does not at all invalidate the excellence of the free gift; it rather increaſes it, by fitting our natures for it's enjoyment The parent, who leaves his child an inheritance, ſubject to conditions, of which the performance tends only to encreaſe the enjoyment, is not ſurely leſs but more bountiful on that account. The very reſtrictions he impoſes are acts of kindneſs and proofs of love.—The conditions of the goſpel ought to be conſidered in this light. Theſe conditions may be ſummed up in one word, but of very extenſive ſignification,—in Charity. Charity does not merely imply benevolent acts, but benevolent thoughts and affections: in one word, Chriſtian charity denotes a heart filled with that ſacred ſtream of divine love which overflows in love to mankind. This is that qualifying habit, which I mentioned above; and which divine mercy made a condition of future happineſs; becauſe it tends to approximate us to the image of God; and becauſe we could not be happy, even in heaven, without it.

Jeſus makes a happy immortality, as far as it is an act of a man's own choice, to conſiſt in benevo-

lence; * though he refers the gift itſelf, not to our merits, but to the mere mercy of God, through the mediatorial ſacrifice of the Son, whoſe "birth was of the womb of the morning;"—"whoſe goings forth were from of old, from everlaſting." †

If the unbeliever aſk me, How, and in what preciſe manner the ſacrifice of Jeſus could annul the mortality of the human ſpecies, and procure for mankind an admiſſion into manſions of eternal bleſſedneſs, I muſt fairly confeſs that I cannot explain it. It is enough for us to know, that we cannot be fitted for thoſe manſions, without becoming like unto Jeſus, in our benevolent affections. It it enough for us, if we have adequate

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* See the paſſage which I have quoted from St. Matt. page 139, 140.

† Jeſus repreſents himſelf as the ſource of immortality, in the following paſſages. "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the father but by me. John xiv. 6. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he ſhall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my fleſh, which I will give for the *life of the world.*" In a ſolemn invocation to his Father, a little before his agony in the garden, Jeſus ſays, "*This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God; and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* John xvii. 3.

conceptions and a ſerious conviction of this truth, without perplexing the mind to unravel myſteries, which can never be comprehended, and *which heaven never deſigned that man ſhould comprehend.* In a future life, more pages of the book of revealed, as well as natural knowledge, will probably be unfolded to us: at preſent, there are many inexplicable points in both; on which, while our faculties are thus dim, it behoves us to be ſilent.

If, knowing our duty here, we perform it to the beſt of our power, we ſhall certainly be accepted of God. Whether we ſquare our faith by the precepts of Athanaſius, or Arius, or Socinus, we ſhall enter into life, if we keep the commandments; and follow, as nearly as poſſible, the ſteps of Jeſus, which point the way to immortality.* Vainly to attempt to pierce the

* I feel a firm, unſhaken conviction, that it is the vital benevolence of the heart and affections, and not the mere aſſent of the mind to any myſtery of doctrine, which conſtitutes that religion which is moſt pleaſing in the ſight of God. There cannot be a more conciſe and juſt deſcription of religion than that by St. James i 2, 7. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this; To viſit the poor and fatherleſs in their affliction, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world."

clouds and darkneſs that ſurround the Chriſtian ſanctuary may waſte our time, but cannot improve our piety. To meditate on things that are above the ſphere of our comprehenſion, and on which, if we lived for a thouſand years we could never form any diſtinct ideas, only ſerves to bewilder the underſtanding, without mending the heart. The religion of Jeſus conſiſts more in beneficent actions than in contemplative raptures;—more in the calm and ſerene ſenſations of meekneſs, gentleneſs and forgiveneſs than in the wild emotions of enthuſiaſm.

That this is a faithful delineation of the ſpirit of the religion of Jeſus, we may eaſily learn from an attentive peruſal of his various diſcourſes; and particularly his inimitable ſermon on the mount; which is a ſummary of the whole Chriſtian doctrine; and which exhibits a picture of mild, unoſtentatious piety, ſoftening the affec-

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There are, certainly, good and bad men among all ſects; and, perhaps, it would be difficult to ſay, on which ſide the ſum of moral worth preponderates. Hence, ought we not to learn that what opinions we entertain about certain dark and inexplicable matters, are not eſſential to ſalvation? And ought they to kindle any animoſity between us? Ought we to behold the mote in our brother's eye, and to neglect the beam in our own?—How long will *Chriſtians continue* to hate each other?

tions, purifying the thoughts, and infuſing into the ſoul the ſacred fire of pure, undefiled devotion; and of love human and divine.

In Jeſus there was a warm and exalted ſpirit of devotion. In prayer he ſeems to have paſſed the intervals that were left to him from the exerciſe of charity, and the functions of his public miniſtry.

The Evangeliſts frequently tell us of his retiring to a mountain to pray.* St. Luke vi. 12. tells us—"that Jeſus went out to a mountain, where he continued all night in prayer to God." Retiring from the buſtle of the world, he ſought to give vent to the emotions of piety, in the tranquillity of ſolitude. He went where he might not be diſturbed by the "buſy hum of men."

The ſhades of ſilence and of ſolitude are certainly moſt congenial to thoſe exerciſes of devotion; from which, man returns into the world with freſh energy to combat it's pollutions, and to reſiſt it's temptations.

* See Matt. xiv. 13. John vi. 15.

The example, as well as the inſtructions, of Jeſus* enjoin us, occaſionally, to quit the intercourſe of ſociety, in order to commune with our own hearts and with him who made us. In this hallowed commerce, the ſoul, as it were, breaths in a purer atmoſphere; where it's organs, refined from their groſſneſs, expand with a more free and ſpiritual energy.

The ſpirit of devotion, whoſe habitual exerciſe feeds and keeps alive it's own flame, is ſoon chilled into torpor or weakened into laſſitude, by continued and unremitting converſe with the gay and buſy world.

No man's heart is proof againſt the ſeductions of unceaſing diſſipation. Unleſs the thoughts are turned by frequent abſtraction from temporal and ſenſual objects, and purified by the fire of the altar, they ſoon

* "And in the morning, riſing up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a ſolitary place, and there prayed," Mark i. 35.

"When thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray ſtanding in the ſynagogues and in the corners of the ſtreets, that they may be ſeen of men. But thou, when thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut the door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret." &c. Matt. vi. 5, 6.

degenerate into filth and corruption. An occaſional ſequeſtration from the world is neceſſary to liberate us from the force of it's enchantments.

The heart of man is naturally diſpoſed to what is good;* virtue and beneficence ſeem moſt congenial to to it; they pleaſe without any factitious charms; but as it is, on all ſides, acceſſible to temptations, corruption ſoon finds a way into it.—To guard againſt corruption, it becomes neceſſary to cultivate the ſpirit of devotion; which, when it has become habitual, when God our father, and Jeſus, his meſſenger of immortality, are the objects of our warmeſt affections and our often-contem-

* I am not ignorant, that many are of opinion, that the heart of man is *naturally more* diſpoſed to evil than to good.—But moral evil appears as repugnant to his natural ſentiments, as pain or phyſical evil is to his natural feelings.

Moral and phyſical good have a more intimate connection than is generally ſuppoſed. It is not improbable, that man is born with a moral, as well as a phyſical taſte; but both are liable to be vitiated by improper management, and perverſe aſſociations. Thus the moral taſte comes to reliſh cruelty and injuſtice; as the phyſical taſte, by the ſame ſort of aberration from it's natural and healthy ſtate, is brought to find a gratification in alcohol and tobacco, and a thouſand nauſeous and unwholſome drinks and viands.

plations, the faſcination of periſhable pleaſures is broken, and reaſon riſes ſuperior to the tyranny of the ſenſes.

From the ſhrine of devotion, we gather ſtrength to advance in holineſs. If our affections are ſoured by the injuries of enemies or the treachery of friends, prayer is a ſovereign balm to aſſuage the fretful acrimony of the heart. In the holy effuſions of prayer, the ſpirit of animoſity is exhaled into a diviner element; and we imbibe courage to imitate Jeſus in doing good; careleſs whether the good we do, meet with imprecations or with praiſes.

Our prayers to God ought to be aſſociated with fervor and with ſerioufneſs. When we are on the knees of devotion, we ſhould ſteadily keep our thoughts fixed on the Divine Preſence; and ſhould never forget, that God knows all we think, as well as all we ſay. To be guilty of levity, in any work of moment, ſhews littleneſs of mind;—but to ſuffer any levity to debaſe our worſhip of the Almighty, is to mingle folly with impiety.

In his acts of religious adoration, Jeſus ſeems, as far

as we can collect from the ſhort notices of the Evangeliſts, to have been, in a moſt peculiar manner, diſtinguiſhed by earneſtneſs and ſolemnity. The characteriſtic fervency of his devotional exerciſes may be ſeen by conſulting John xvii. which contains a ſublime, a feeling and impreſſive interceſſion to his heavenly father for his diſciples and followers; and which well deſcribes the awful and dignified ſerioufneſs of his devotion.

Before his apprehenſion, Jeſus retired to prepare for the laſt hour of his ſtay among mortals, in the ſhades of the garden of Gethſemane. What warmth, what ſincerity, what energy of piety is marked in his prayer, at that diſtreſſing moment! "Father! if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheleſs, not my will, but thine be done!" This prayer does not loſe it's emphaſis by it's conciſeneſs. Genuine anguiſh is never diffuſive. It is more given to taciturnity or abruptneſs than to prolixity. This prayer of Jeſus will ſuit every Chriſtian, who, languiſhing in ſorrow, lifts up his head to heaven, for that comfort which nothing in the world can beſtow.

Devotion is that fountain, from which miſery may

fetch the pureſt ſtreams of conſolation. The Evangeliſt tells us, that the prayer of Jeſus brought an angel from heaven, to miniſter comfort unto him. This ſeems to intimate the power of devotion;—of devotion warm, genuine and ſincere. Angels of conſolation, though inviſible to our perceptions, are probably ever attendant on the righteous; and whiſper the ſpirit of peace, in the inquietude of grief.

The earneſtneſs with which Jeſus prayed increaſed with his increaſing deſpondency. The Evangeliſt, without any embelliſhment of rhetoric, tells us, that "he prayed more earneſtly;" and he has delineated the exquiſite peculiarity of his agonies, by ſaying, that "his ſweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground."

There is a principle of ſatiety attached to all earthly objects; the heart ſoon grows tired of them. It ſeeks for ſomething imperiſhable on which to fix. The very organization of man, renders him incapable of unmixed and continued ſatisfaction in what is ſenſual and tranſitory.

The ſoul will, at times, languiſh with wearineſs, in the midſt of every human enjoyment. The palled ſenſe and the ſick heart ſeek where to find reſt; but they find none here; where they behold every thing in a ſtate of uncertainty, of change and decay. They therefore turn for ſolace to him who is immutable. The power that made all things becomes the ſubject of our adoration, the theme of our wonder, our gratitude and our praiſe.

But we muſt take care that we do not ſubſtitute prayer, which ought to be conſidered only as an incentive to, for the practice of religious duties. Devotion ought in us, as in Jeſus, to be reſorted to, not to ſupplant, but to fill up the interſtices of practical piety.

That alone is devotion, true and undefiled, which diſpoſes the heart to the production of human happineſs; or makes it ſympathiſe more tenderly with human miſery. For this purpoſe, prayer will firſt quench in us, all ill-will and animoſity towards all men; for, devotion can be no better than idle mummery, if it be not aſſociated with the ſpirit of mildneſs and forgiveneſs.

Before the heart can glow with that genuine love of God which prayer ſuppoſes, and of which it breaths the fragrant incenſe, every ſpark of malevolence towards our fellow-creatures muſt be extinguiſhed. Without this, prayer, inſtead of being an offering ſweet and grateful to heaven, is only a fetid vapour, exhaled from corruption.

Prayer extinguiſhes hate, in order to kindle love; and the love, that is thus kindled, will not be narrow and partial, limited by exceptions, or debaſed by any alloy of bitterneſs, but, like the ſource from which it flows, and which is the aſpiration of the Spirit of God upon the ſoul, in it's abſtraction from all low and periſhable purſuits, it will embrace the expanſe of univerſal nature.

Prayer, while it warms and invigorates all the ſympathies which intereſt us in the happineſs of our family or our friends, at the ſame time, inſpires in the breaſt the flame of univerſal benevolence. The human race, that are ſpread over the whole globe, are the object of Chriſtian prayer.—The nearer approaches which the ſoul makes to it's great and glorious original, the more

it inhales the ſpirit of a diffuſive tenderneſs. It ceaſes to feel any little vulgar animoſities. The flame of divine love, excited in the human breaſt by the genuine fervor of prayer, exalts and refines all the affections, and makes every nerve of man thrill with the mild and delicious raptures of univerſal benevolence.

So ſtrenuouſly does Chriſtianity inſiſt on that piety which is uncontaminated by hypocriſy, that it makes even the government of the thoughts a point of religious duty. On this occaſion, it was well ſaid by Boerhave, as the judicious Paley has before remarked, "That our Saviour knew mankind better than Socrates." Impure ideas adminiſter poiſon to virtue; and food to depravity. They taint the modeſty of youth; and they heat the ſenſuality of age. They injure thoſe decencies which are eſſential to purity of manners; and that delicacy which is the charm of mixed ſociety. Licentious ideas and licentious diſcourſe, habitually indulged, diſſever thoſe combinations of chaſte and ſerious thought which are the defence of virtue; and inevitably lead to a fatal and incurable corruption. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of thy mouth," was the injunction

of divine wiſdom; and the integrity of the moral principle depends greatly on it's obſervance. *

But let it not be ſuppoſed, that Chriſtianity is an enemy to the pleaſures of innocence, to cheerfulneſs of converſe, and the ſparkling gaieties of fancy. The religion of Jeſus does not, as men of gloomy minds have too often imagined, direct us to be conſtantly depreſſed with deſpondency, meditating on eternity, or muſing over the grave. Are all the energies of man, who is

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* Count Rumford, vol 1. 35. ſays, "So great is the effect of cleanlineſs upon man, that it extends even to his moral habits. Virtue never dwelt long with filth and naſtineſs; nor do I believe that there ever was a perſon, ſcrupulouſly attentive to cleanlineſs, who was a conſummate villain."

If outward filth and naſtineſs of body have ſuch an influence on the moral principle, ſurely a ſtronger influence muſt be exerted by filth and naſtineſs of thought and ſpeech. There is a conſtant action and reaction between words and ideas. Thus corruption operates with a double force. It is revolting, to obſerve, in the converſation of the diſſolute, the number of harmleſs and often ſacred expreſſions, which they aſſociate with indecency, and which are no ſooner uttered than they kindle the ſenſual fire. If the young wiſh to guard againſt depravity, or the old to ſtop it's progreſs, they cannot too ſcrupulouſly ſhun impurity of thought and ſpeech. It may be laid down as a maxim, juſtified by general experience,—That there is no perſon, who is habitually foul-mouthed, whoſe eſteem is worth ſeeking, or whoſe honeſty can be relied on.

ſaid to have been created in the image of God, to be damped by inceſſant reflection on his latter end? Are languor of ſoul and uneaſineſs of conſcience, dejection of ſpirit and gloomineſs of ideas the eſſential characteriſtics of Chriſtian piety? Can we not be ſaved, unleſs we are continually darkening the imagination with the ſufferings of the croſs? Did Jeſus direct that piety which borders on miſanthropy; which, in the deluſive dreams of enthuſiaſm, beſtows the tribute of ſalvation rather on the fervor of the lips, than of the heart; on the auſterity of the devotions, more than on the benevolence of the conduct? Did not Jeſus himſelf ſanction both by precept and example that piety which mingles with the world, without mingling in it's corruptions, or partaking in it's crimes; which neglects not the various duties of public and domeſtic life; and which is the kind promoter of ſocial happineſs in all it's varieties? Did Jeſus reprobate thoſe inoffenſive gaieties of heart, which form a part, and no inconſiderable part, of the captivations of life? Did he repreſent the Chriſtian temper of a gloomy aſpect, covering the face of it's votaries with tears and mourning? Is he not himſelf conſtantly deſcribed in Scripture by the image of a lamb?—an image of cheerfulneſs, which we ought not to diſſo-

ciate from our ideas of religion. Is not the kind notice which he took of little children, of whom the characteriſtic feature is gay and harmleſs mirth; and his declaration, that of ſuch is the kingdom of God, a ſufficient teſtimony, that he wiſhed rather to increaſe than to diminiſh the pleaſurable ſenſations of life; and that the diſpoſition and the manners of a Chriſtian ſhould not be ſhrouded by the forbidding gloom, the ſullen ſpirit, and the weeping countenance of an enthuſiaſt or a ſectary? Is not the firſt miracle that he wrought, at a marriage, in Cana of Galilee, a declaration that he did not come to baniſh cheerfulneſs from the earth; and that the profeſſion of his religion was by no means incompatible with ſocial enjoyment?——Thoſe who ſketch the figure of Chriſtianity with a deſponding look, and a dejected poſture, muſt be ſtrangers to it's genuine ſpirit, ſhedding joy upon the heart, and baniſhing ſadneſs and aſperity from the brow.

At the cloſe of the eighteenth century, let us not rake from it's aſhes the ſpirit of Calvin, ſcowling with the moroſeneſs of fanaticiſm;—for ever lowering over the infernal abyſs, and ſcattering fire and brimſtone in the paths of harmleſs pleaſantry.—Let us not conjure

up this ſpirit from it's repoſe, in order to eclipſe the ſpirit of Jeſus, bright, ſerene, unclouded, benign and cheerful; indulgent to human frailty; comforting the weary and the heavy-laden;—friendly to innocent pleaſure, and adverſe to that ſenſual apathy and that haggard ſuperſtition, which would ſtrip vivacity of it's playfulneſs and ſprightlineſs of it's ſmile.

The general complexion of human life is ſufficiently melancholy, without any artificial expedients to cover it with more diſmal hues. It is a more neceſſary and more ſacred duty to ſeek for balm, with which to ſooth the afflicted, than for ſorrows, with which to depreſs the happy. If we plant the cypreſs and other emblems of grief among the habitations of the dead, there is no reaſon why we ſhould not permit the voice of gladneſs to be heard in the chambers of the living.

There are ſome recreations which the Puritans of the laſt century conſidered as flagrant ſins. Among theſe, the amuſements of the drama were more particularly the objects of their invective.

Mr. Wilberforce, whoſe work is ſhaded with the

ſombre tints of Puritaniſm, ſeems to conſider the theatres as inauſpicious to piety; and as places to which a Chriſtian ought not to reſort.

If Mr. Wilberforce do not chooſe to be preſent at a play, becauſe the play-houſes are frequented by debauchees, he might, on the ſame ground of argument, abſtain from the ſenate or the ſanctuary. Corruption and depravity are to be met with in every walk of life; and under almoſt every modification of ſocial intercourſe; and if we will go where they are not, we muſt go out of the world at once. I know no other alternative.—But does not Mr. Wilberforce recollect, that the divine author of Chriſtianity eat, without ſcruple, *at the ſame table*, with publicans and ſinners? Does he not know that virtue is proved by reſiſting temptation; and that he diſcovers the brighteſt integrity who is chaſte amid ſeduction, and incorrupt amid corruption.

The corruptions, of which Mr. Wilberforce complains, are accidental not eſſential to the theatre; and it is probable that they would exiſt, with more criminal aggravations, if there were not a theatre in London.—Vice and licentiouſneſs, ingenious in expedients, would

ſoon find other haunts; and which would only be more dangerous if they were more inveloped in the ſhades of myſtery, and leſs expoſed to that influence of public opinion, of which notwithſtanding it's partial eccentricities, the general reſult is always favourable to the intereſts of virtue, of delicacy and of chaſtity.

The motive which prompts the amuſements of mankind, is agreeable ſenſation; which admits of two diviſions, into phyſical and moral. The former is ſuited more to mere animal, the laſt to rational beings. It cannot be doubted to which claſs the pleaſures of the theatre belong; they are certainly more attached to intellect than to ſenſuality; and have rather a moral than a phyſical taſte.

The ſtage, even in it's preſent degenerate ſtate, when it abandons the ſublime efforts of tragedy, which inſtructs by painting the influence of the paſſions on the human character and on human happineſs, for the wit, the vivacity and the playfulneſs of comedy, for the drollery of farce, or for the magnificence of dreſs and ſcenery, for the pomp of proceſſions and all the ingenious verſatility of art,—muſt ſtill be conſidered as providing

harmleſs repaſt;—and one, indeed, of no inconſiderable utility, as it prevents the ſpectator from recurring to more ſenſual and pernicious entertainments, to the exceſſes of the tavern, the diſcontent and acrimony of the card-table, and the more ruinous criminality of the gaming-houſe.

It cannot be denied, but that it has been long the faſhion, and which has lately grown to a rank exceſs, to contaminate the language of the drama, with a mixture of ribaldry and obſcenity; and a profuſion of all the contemptible equivocations of indecency. For theſe, no excuſe can be pleaded; they tend directly to corrupt the heart, and to vitiate the moral ſentiments. They profane the ſacredneſs of modeſty; and they wither that nice ſenſibility to the bluſh of ſhame, which, when on particular occaſions it ſhews it's delicate tints on the cheek of youth and beauty, is inexpreſſibly captivating.*

* I cannot, in this place, refrain from making a quotation from Dr. Thornton's Medical Extracts,—a work not more conſpicuous for it's elegance, than for it's piety; and which deſerves a place in the library of every divine, as well as every phyſician.

The morals of mankind ſeem reciprocally to influence and to be influenced by their amuſements. One gives a colour to the other. This is perhaps the reaſon why, in London, which is a vaſt focus of ſenſuality, ſo many of our modern productions are ſo laviſhly tinctured with indecency. Depraved morals ſeek, with curious ſolicitude, the depraved ſeaſoning of an obſcene and wanton phraſeology; and which, in it's turn, aggravates the depravity from which it ſprings.

The only ſubſtantial remedy for the corruptions of the theatre, is an amelioration of morals; and which

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"*Modeſty* is one of the moſt diſtinguiſhing and *attractive* characteriſtics of the female ſex. *Modeſty* has a double effect: it heightens the deſire of the male, and deters him from rudeneſs, or improper behaviour. It both *attracts* and *repels*. There is no part of the female character which men revere ſo much as *modeſty*. It is the brighteſt and moſt valuable jewel with which a woman can be adorned. A fine woman, without *modeſty*, inſtead of gaining the affections of men, becomes an object of contempt. It is, therefore, not only the intereſt of females to cultivate *modeſty*, but to guard, with the moſt anxious attention, againſt the ſmalleſt encroachments. Every attack, however apparently inſignificant, ſhould be repelled with ſpirit and intrepidity. To men of ſenſibility, a ſingle glance of the eye will tell them that their conduct is improper, and make them not only inſtantly deſiſt, but prevent any further attempt. It is equally the intereſt of men to cheriſh, and not to injure by indelicacy, a quality from which they derive ſo much pleaſure and advantage." Med. Ext, vol. iii. 512.

would by no means be promoted by the ſuppreſſion of all theatrical diverſions. This effect is only to be hoped for, from a more general and virtuous ſyſtem of education; and the exhibition *of a purer example* by the great;—the corruption of whoſe ſentiments, the prodigality of whoſe vices, and the pollution of whoſe taſte deſcends to thoſe beneath them. At preſent, the upper ranks are the patrons and the originals of the great maſs of folly, indecency and depravity, which are ſeen not only on the mimic ſtage, but alſo on the ſtage of real life.

But, notwithſtanding all the corruptions of the theatre, I am inclined to believe, that when all the means, whether direct or indirect, by which they foſter the growth of vice have been computed, a great balance will remain in favour of their general tendency to promote the intereſts of virtue.

The ſympathetic principle, which preſides in the breaſt of the ſpectator, ſeems to be always moſt powerfully excited when virtue is ſeen to triumph over vice; and when benevolence, full of life and energy, is delineated ſcattering joy and happineſs over the whole ex-

tent of it's horizon.—Then, even corruption, for a moment, ſoaring from it's baſeneſs, pays it's homage to virtue;—then the applauſes of the audience are moſt redoubled and moſt ſincere.

Mr. Wilberforce makes religion to conſiſt in the exerciſe of the affections; or, in what, according to his deſcription of the matter, and notwithſtanding all his palliations, muſt be underſtood to mean—an inflamed ſtate of the devotional feelings. Thus he, indirectly, encourages enthuſiaſm and hypocriſy; for, by artificial contrivances, the affections may be raiſed to almoſt any pitch; and the greateſt ſinners have ſometimes been abſorbed in what might thus be called—pious ecſtacies. The effervescence of devotional feelings has indeed often been the characteriſtic of the moſt worthleſs of mankind.

Mr. Wilberforce would have acted more wiſely, if he had made religion to conſiſt, as Jeſus Chriſt evidently did, in thoſe benevolent ſympathies which invariably lead to benevolent actions. Here there is no room for hypocriſy or deluſion. Religion is appreciated by a rule of which we cannot miſtake the application.

When Jeſus was aſked, which was the great commandment in the law, he anſwered, "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind. This the firſt and great commandment. And the ſecond is like unto it. Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. On theſe two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matt. xxii. In Mark xii. he declared, There is none other commandment greater than theſe.

Hence we learn, that the love of God, to be pure and holy, muſt be identified with the love of mankind. In other words—divine love, is ſocial love impelling to pure beneficence; His boſom, therefore, poſſeſſes the genuine principle of divine love; the elementary flame of immortal happineſs, whoſe actions and affections are conſonant to this grand and fundamental law of all religion and all morality; "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf;" or, as the ſame precept has been expreſſed by Jeſus, in other words, "Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do ye alſo unto them." Matt. vii. 12.

Thus we ſee that the Chriſtian ſyſtem blends religion

and morality in an indiſſoluble union. The neglect of one is the neglect of both. To disjoin devotion and morals, or morals and devotion, is to renounce the goſpel.

"Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf;" is, as we have ſeen, that command which the founder of Chriſtianity repreſented, as comprehending the ſum of it's duties. The pureſt adoration, therefore, which we can pay to God, is to promote the happineſs of our brethren. Where divine love is made the motive to ſocial, the narrow and ſelfiſh vaniſh in the expanded ſtream of benevolent ſenſations. Chriſtian love, glowing warm and genuine in the heart, conſumes the force of the ſelfiſh principle; as the rod of Aaron ſwallowed up the rods of the magicians. Exod. vii 12.

There is in man both a ſelfiſh and a ſocial principle, —a principle which attaches him to ſelf-intereſt, and another which binds him to the intereſts of his kind. The firſt is encouraged by ſolitude; which ſoon compreſſes the affections into one point, and reconciles the heart to that, of which the ſocial principle inſpires the

averſion;—the taſte of undivided, unſhared and iſolated enjoyment.

It is the ſocial principle, which, by an inviſible but powerful magic, touching all the chords of ſympathy, tends to make man weary and comfortleſs when alone. It attracts him, by an irreſiſtible charm, into an intercourſe with his kind, and inſinuates an attractive fondneſs for the endearments of friendſhip.

Man is placed, in life, in ſuch circumſtances and amid ſuch relations as tend to invigorate and expand the ſocial and ſympathetic, and to ſtifle and counteract the ſelfiſh principle. The kindred affections, the ſpirit of family-love, of love parental, filial, fraternal tends to cheriſh, and unfold, at a very early period, the embryon beauties of benevolent ſenſation. Even from the breaſt of our mother we ſeem to imbibe thoſe benign influences of ſympathy which abate the reliſh for ſolitary enjoyment, and teach us that we increaſe our own happineſs when we ſhare it with others.

As we grow up, the connections of friendſhip and of love (particularly the latter), promote ſtill farther the

growth of the ſocial principle. Love teaches us that we are moſt happy by a reciprocation of happineſs.

Friendſhip multiplies the tender links of ſympathy; and relaxes the power of ſelfiſhneſs; by aſſociating a multitude of divided intereſts and ſenſations with our own.

In Paradiſe, it was not good for man to be alone; and certainly in that ſtate of complicated miſery to which we are born, and in which we have to live, it cannot be good for us to be alone. The fading ſpirits require the refreſhing intercourſe of ſociety.

Short intervals of abſence from the peopled world, are, indeed, auſpicious to virtue; but continued and habitual ſolitude chills the boſom againſt the warm impulſes of benevolence, and freezes the beſt blood, that the ſympathetic affections would circulate through the heart.

The relations in which nature has placed us and the affections of family, of love and friendſhip which are the ſource of ſo much happineſs, and which indeed are

the pureſt ſources of human happineſs, all tend to elicit and mature the ſympathetic principle; which connects the intereſt of the individual with the intereſt of his fellow-creatures. By rendering benevolence the ſource of our moſt agreeable ſenſations, they impel to it's exerciſe, by the moſt powerful incitement.

Yet, ſo ſtrongly is the benevolent counteracted by the domineering, ſelfiſh principle, that, notwithſtanding all the natural and aſſociated cauſes, which give a bias to benevolence, ſelfiſhneſs too often prevails over ſympathy. The love of ſolitary and excluſive abſorbs, inſtead of being abſorbed by, the love of communicated bliſs. The individual conſults his own happineſs, coldly negligent of that of his kindred and his kind. A baſe and ignominious ſelf-intereſt becomes the tyrant of the ſoul, and ſmothers every ſpark of benevolent ſenſation.

But the Chriſtian religion, originating from divine wiſdom, and favouring thoſe relations of nature and thoſe attractions of ſympathy, which it had before ordained, lends it's awful ſanctions to extinguiſh the ſelfiſh and to inſpire the ſocial flame.

The meſſenger of immortality has threatened the ſelfiſh with this awful ſentence: "Go, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire;" while thoſe tender-hearted perſons, who, feeling the divine glow of love unfeigned, labour, like miniſtering angels, to ſooth the diverſified miſeries of human life, ſhall be called "the bleſſed of God;" and, when all the grandeur of the world is crumbled into duſt, ſhall ſhine like the ſtars for ever and ever.

Thus we ſee that the whole ſum and ſubſtance of religion, conſiſts not in the effervеſcing ſenſations of devotional zeal, but in the exerciſe of thoſe benevolent ſympathies which endear men to God, while they endear them to each other. Let us conſtantly try the Chriſtianity of Chriſtans by this teſt, and we ſhall never be deceived.

But, if we make religion to conſiſt in thoſe tumultuous emotions of the ſoul, which have no relation to beneficence, or in a bare aſſent to thoſe doctrines which have no influence on human conduct, we are only opening a door, by which enthuſiaſm and impoſture may enter into the ſanctuary of the righteous, and uſurp

the honours which belong to ſincere and unaffected piety.

But though I am an enemy to enthuſiaſtic zeal, and fanatic turbulence, yet, let it not be ſuppoſed, that I would, by any means, diſcourage that degree of devout ſenſation, which is the never-failing aſſociate of true holineſs; which is mingled with beneficence, and is reſtrained from the ebullitions of intemperance.

In the breaſt of the righteous, there is a pure and perenial ſpring of conſolatory ſenſation, whoſe waters are never turbid; which, in affliction, are a cordial to the faint ſpirits; and which, in the torturing hour of misfortune and deſpondency, cheer the aching breaſt, with thoſe calm and delicious inſtillations of love and hope which are a foretaſte of immortality.

As far as all the varied emotions of the heart, of which ſome branch from phyſical ſenſibility, others from early aſſociation can be preſerved ſeparate from the indiſtinct fervours of enthuſiaſm, and be made ſubſervient to the energies of practical goodneſs, they ought to be encouraged.

Of all the affections, of a religious caſt, which can enter into the ſoul of man, gratitude is one which ought to be cultivated with moſt care, and cheriſhed with moſt fondneſs.—Gratitude, which may be denominated, one of the handmaids of practical piety, means ſuch a devout and ſerious ſenſe of the goodneſs of God, as naturally ſoftens and expands the heart towards his creatures.

When the grateful man receives any diſtinguiſhed favour or kindneſs from one of his fellow-men, his heart inſtantly vibrates towards him with a degree of partial fondneſs. He feels a warm intereſt in his benefactor's welfare; he is ready to rejoice over his good fortune, or to mourn over his bad;—and theſe kind emotions are gradually extended towards his family and his connections. His gratitude cauſes him, in ſome meaſure, to identify his own feelings with thoſe of his benefactor; he grows attached to his friendſhips, he catches the complexion of his ſympathies.

Gratitude to God, where felt in it's genuine purity, will be analogous in it's operations, with gratitude to man; but, in the former, the ſenſations of love will be heightened by thoſe of adoration. The grateful heart, in

it's moments of abſtraction from earthly to heavenly objects, thrilling with pure and ſimple, not riotous and turbid, ecſtacies,—will be warmly and affectionately diſpoſed towards the whole family of mankind.

All thoſe tender and ſympathetic obligations which we now include in the name of Gratitude, ſeem, in ſcriptural language, to be comprehended in the name of Love; and I have before obſerved, that love to God, is the ſum of Chriſtian duty; and comprehends every branch of practical beneficence.

The Apoſtle John, who was himſelf a pattern of the meekneſs of love, in his firſt epiſtle, which breaths the ſpirit of his maſter, conſtantly conſiders love, or gratitude, or whatever affection or ſpecies of adoration it be, which divine love embraces, as analogous to practical beneficence.

Our Saviour himſelf frequently inculcated the ſame doctrine. In John xiv. 15. he ſays, "If ye love me, keep my commandments:" again, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Theſe expreſſions imply an inviolate union be-

tween devotion and practical piety—the piety of the affections and the conduct; as will plainly appear when we come to conſider what is the ſubſtance of thoſe commandments of Jeſus; of which, he conſiders the obſervance as a full and ſatisfactory expreſſion of our love to him, or to him that ſent him. *

In John xv. 12. Jeſus ſays, with great emphaſis, "This is my commandment; that ye love one another, as I have loved you." In John xiii 34, 35. Jeſus had enforced this precept, if poſſible, with more energy; "A *new commandment* I give unto you—that ye love one another; as I alſo have loved you, that ye love one another. *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.*"

Here it is remarkable, that the duty of that mutual love, which St. Paul calls charity, is ſaid to be "a *new commandment.*"—Now, it was not new as to the expreſſion; for the ſame commandment is found in the law. "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf."

* "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who ſent him."

Levit. xix. 18.—But, under the Old Teſtament-diſpenſation, this rule of life was buried under a maſs of ceremonies; and was not made the prominent and diſtinguiſhing feature of the Moſaic ſyſtem.—On the other hand, Jeſus inſiſted on it as the eſſential characteriſtic of his diſciples; as the teſt, the paſſ-word of his religion. He made it a ſacred rule of conſcience, a vital principle of action; from which all the Chriſtian virtues ought to flow in copious ſtreams; and to diſpenſe happineſs, in whatever channel they are rolled.

Well, therefore, might Jeſus call this "*a new commandment;* when he enforced it with new energy, conſecrated it with new ſanctions, and made the ſpirit of love as eſſential to the vitality of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, as the ſpirit of animation is to the animal functions.

"By this," ſaid the ſon of man (and let his words ſink deep into the heart of every Chriſtian), "ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciple, *if ye have love* ONE TO ANOTHER."—My God! if mutual love be the eſſential and characteriſtic diſtinction of the true followers of Jeſus, how long has it been unknown, or how much has it been deſpiſed!

The annals of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, dropping blood and breathing animoſity in almoſt every page, teach us that Chriſtians have been uſually more diſtinguiſhed by their bitterneſs and aſperity, than by their love and forbearance towards each other; and that they have ſometimes diſgraced the benign religion of their maſter, by the perpetration of cruelties, at which reaſon bluſhes, and benevolence turns pale.

How often has bigotry, whoſe blood rages with the luſt of cruelty, preſumed that Chriſt would be gratified by tying hereſy to the ſtake, or putting it to the ſword? Has not the leaſt difference in the mereſt minutiæ of opinion, in matters of total indifference, or in queſtions about inſcrutable myſteries and inexplicable doctrines, frequently excited the moſt furious contentions in the Chriſtian world?—contentions which could only be appeaſed by the ſlaughter of thoſe among whom they were agitated, and who ought to have been endeared to each other by a reciprocal affection.

It has, alas! but too long been forgotten by thoſe, who have profeſſed the warmeſt zeal for the religion of Jeſus, that *brotherly love ought to be a common bond*

of harmony and friendſhip, among all ſects and denominations of Chriſtians. The various ſhades and complexions of faith, that are found among Chriſtians, ought no more to affect their mutual good-will and kindneſs, than the earth is affected by the tints or ſhapes of the ever-changing clouds that ſprinkle the horizon.

Whatever may be our differences of opinion about modes of faith, or myſteries of doctrine, we are all equally dear to our common maſter, Chriſt; if we fulfil his royal law, and *have love to one another.* By this teſt, thou haſt promiſed, O bleſſed Jeſus! to own us for thy diſciples,—*if we have love one to another.*

Love is the hallowed flame which ſhould be exhaled to heaven, pure as the pureſt incenſe from the hearts of Chriſtians. Like the veſtal fire, it ought never for a moment to be extinguiſhed. While love prevails, the ſpirit of Jeſus ſways the heart; but as ſoon as it vaniſhes in the guſts of hate, or the rage of intolerance, the life, the ſoul, the beauty of Chriſtianity is no more!—The name of Chriſtian may ſtill be uſurped, the mummery of devotion may ſtill be performed with affected ſolicitude,

but the moment that the æthereal fire of Chriſtian love leaves the boſom, that moment every ſpark *of* VITAL *Chriſtianity* expires. The fiends of darkneſs crowd into the heart which the ſpirit of Jeſus has forſaken; and the pretended Chriſtian ceaſes to have any more likeneſs to Chriſt, than the tyger, prowling in the deſert, *has to the infant, ſmiling at the breaſt.*

A PICTURE OF

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

Jeſus on the croſs, a martyr to truth.

SOCRATES died with dignity and compoſure, amid the ſoothing conſolations, the flattery and the admiration of his friends. Jeſus ſuffered a death more exquiſitely painful; and the pain was encreaſed by every indignity which malice could contrive.

The firmneſs which is ſupported by applauſe, and by the expreſſion of a cordial ſympathy, ſinks into dejection when attacked by ſcorn, humiliation and inſult.

How beautiful is the prayer of Jeſus! "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."—Since the time of Jeſus, there have been ſeveral, who, inhaling his ſpirit of forgiveneſs, have at the very moment, in which they were undergoing the moſt excruciating ſufferings implored, the divine mercy on their relentleſs perſecutors. But does any part of hiſtory, anterior to the Chriſtian æra, preſent us with an inſtance of the ſame kind?

The Indian, when tied to the ſtake, and put to a lingering death by the ſevereſt tortures, which are lengthened out, by ingenious cruelty, to their longeſt ſpan of endurance, will bear pain with unſhaken firmneſs. The early habit of ſupporting pain, aſſiſted by certain ferocious ſentiments of national glory, and of individual ambition, generates that hardineſs which can ſtifle the exclamations of ſuffering; but he who ſeems fortified by inſenſibility againſt miſery, rather excites the ſublime ſenſations of wonder, than the tender ones of commiſeration.—We cannot well ſympathiſe with thoſe ſufferings which the ſufferer does not feel. We often gaze on inſenſibility with averſion, but never with tenderneſs.

What, in the midſt of his ſufferings, are the ruling ſenſations of the ſavage? Are they thoſe of benevolence and forgiveneſs? No;—they are the wild emotions of revenge, infuriated to madneſs.—Every acceſſion of pain or aggravation of torture only incenſes his vindictive rage. He utters the moſt bitter and unrelenting execrations againſt his perſecutors; he calls on his friends and country-men to retaliate his injuries with ten-fold cruelty. His imagination anticipates the tortures of his oppreſſors; it pourtrays them in every writh and look of agony; and, ſo powerful is the energy of the vindictive principle, that the pleaſures of revenge, though diſtant and uncertain, ſeem almoſt to abſorb the pain of actual ſuffering.—In the hour of agony, the ſavage would revolt at the doctrine of forgiveneſs; his indignant ſpirit would ſpurn it as an inglorious act of puſillanimity or folly.

But lo! the difference between barbarous rage and Chriſtian mildneſs. In the picture of Jeſus, ſuffering on the croſs, what a mixture is there of heroiſm with gentleneſs? How is his fortitude tempered by ſenſibility? He is not callous and impenetrable, but tremblingly alive to all the frail but truly captivating emo-

tions of humanity, He does not affect a proud ſuperiority to thoſe feelings of pain, of which the privation or rather the inſenſibility is the reſult either of a brutal apathy or a diſordered brain; and is never found in any character, that in the leaſt deſerves the name of amiable. The boaſted indifference of the Stoic ſchool is a point which mortality cannot reach; or which no one, who is acquainted with the pleaſures and the conſolations of ſympathy, would wiſh to attain.

Sympathy is excited by a reciprocity of intereſts and of feelings; or, in other words, the intereſt which we take in the ſufferings of others, is in proportion as we can identify their ſenſations with our own.—We can of courſe take no intereſt in the miſery of one who is or ſeems to be inſenſate to the touch of pain. We can feel with thoſe that feel, and who would accordingly ſympathiſe with us in the like circumſtances; but he, who is unconſcious of his own ſufferings, cannot be ſuppoſed to be eaſily affected by the ſufferings of others. The power of ſenſation is aſſociated with ſympathy, and ſympathy with the power of ſenſation.

The ſufferings of Jeſus excite a powerful intereſt; becauſe he ſeems himſelf to have felt them with exquiſite anguiſh. He was as feelingly conſcious of his own miſeries, as of thoſe of others. When then we behold him ſtretched out in agony upon the croſs, we cannot help melting into tenderneſs. Our hearts glow with the ſilent raptures of love and ſympathy.—We hear rather with fondneſs than with averſion his plaintive and piercing cries in his laſt moments; we do not regard them as marks of imbecility; we cheriſh them as indications of humanity. They awaken emotions of tenderneſs, mingled with thoſe of admiration; which are excited by the magnanimity of his forbearance, when we behold him diſdaining the foul ſentiment of vengeance and ſoftening, in the midſt of torture, to feelings of forgiveneſs. His benevolence is not altered by the tumult of barbarous outrage to which he was expoſed; his meekneſs remains unchanged to the laſt; and he dies, as he had lived, in the divine and unblemiſhed perfection of mildneſs and love.

The ſufferings of Jeſus are greatly ennobled by this conſideration;—that they were a willing teſtimony to the truth. All truth, as well phyſical as moral is con-

nected with the well-being of man; but moral truth* is of the greateſt conſequence, as it relates to the influ-

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* A few men think for all the reſt of the world. They give to opinions what ſhapes and complexions they think proper. The mere whiſtle of a name leads the maſs of mankind aſtray, like a "will-with-a-wiſp."

It was once the faſhion to adopt no notions but thoſe which had Ariſtotle's ſanction. It is now a ſort of high-treaſon to call in queſtion certain tenets, on which certain great doctors, who have ſucceeded to the chair of preſumption and infallibility, in which the Stagyrite uſed to ſit, have affixed their ſeal of approbation.

The majority of minds are paſſive; they reſemble wax which receives no impreſſion, but that which is given to it by a power foreign to itſelf. —Whatever opinions ſome popular dogmatiſts may preſcribe, they tranſfer, without heſitation, to their own ſtock; without ſtaying to examine whether they be true or falſe, coherent or abſurd.

Thus it happens, that by far the greater portion of what is called human knowledge, is nothing but an incongruous mixture of prejudices,—a crude conſiſtence of truth, of error, and of folly.

Every opinion is a prejudice which is adopted without an enquiry into it's truth; and, if be on a perplexed and dubious ſubject, without at leaſt balancing the probabilities that make for it's ſupport or it's refutation. Opinions adopted from the mere "ipſe dixit" of any authority, however great that authority may be, are equally prejudices with thoſe which are adopted without enquiry.

However true the notions, in themſelves, may be which we adopt without examination, they are no better than falſhood with reſpect to us, if not knowing the grounds on which they reſt, we are neither able to juſtify them to ourſelves nor to others.—To aſſent to any propoſition, without knowing the arguments on which it is eſtabliſhed, is a ſhameleſs contempt for the ſacredneſs of truth. The firſt indication of a reſpect for truth is a repugnance to form haſty concluſions, or draw haſty inferences; but what can tend more ſtrongly to ſeaſon the mind with error, and to

ence of human conduct on human happineſs; and is not merely related to a preſent and periſhable, but to a

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leſſen the averſion to falſhood, than the habit of concluding without evidence, and of inferring without knowing why?

The majority of people indeed are obliged rather to act than to think, and to employ the body more than the mind. But of thoſe who have leiſure for reflection, and whoſe aggregate numbers may be called the moral ſtrength of nations, how few are there who do not ſwallow opinions like apothecaries pills?—and they are uſually found to turn to as little nouriſhment.

But would men, inſtead of adopting opinions at random, ſeriouſly examine their truth, and particularly the truth of thoſe which have a conſiderable influence on the happineſs of mankind, would they but endeavour to analyſe popular dogmas, inſtead of being enchanted by the witchcraft of great names, that veil of ignorance would ſoon be rent, which now hides ſome of the moſt beautiful parts of the ſhrine of truth.

The produce of truth muſt be in proportion to the number of minds employed in it's production. If, inſtead of one perſon thinking for a thouſand, that thouſand would venture to think for themſelves, the progreſs of mind and the accumulation of knowledge would proceed with a thouſand times it's preſent velocity.

There is no occaſion to fear leſt the means of ſupplying materials for the conſumption of the aggregate energy of ſo many minds, ſhould at laſt be exhauſted. Truth admits not the relations of quantity. It is an infinite ſeries; and is ſpread over an illimitable horizon.

The continually augmenting mental power of finite intelligences tends, by condenſing particular into general truths, to approximate all the varieties of human knowledge to unity; but without ever reaching it. The power of ultimate ſimplification belongs to God alone; to whom all time is as one inſtant preſent, all ſpace as one point, and all the multifarious laws and complicated mechaniſm of univerſal nature as ſimple as a ſingle grain of ſand upon the ſhore.

future and eternal intereſt. It was for this truth, that Jeſus ſuffered; and, in defence of which, he has taught us to make life a willing ſacrifice.

The diffuſion of truth can never be eſſentially injurious to mankind. For, though it may require the ſubverſion of long-exiſted errors, and theſe errors, by mingling with it's benign, their malignant influence, may cauſe ſome diſorders; yet it ſhould always be remembered, that theſe diſorders do not indicate the perniciouſneſs of truth, but the obſtinacy of error. All error being in itſelf an evil, the nature of counteracting cauſes will always occaſion ſome evil to attend it's removal

As any diſeaſe, long ſeated in the human frame, ſtruggles againſt the remedies that are taken to remove it, and is not at laſt removed without much intermediate pain, ſo diſeaſes in the body moral or politic ſeem, in ſome meaſure, to feel the energies of a ſelf-preſerving power; and are ſeldom effectually ſubdued without an obſtinate reſiſtance.

But we muſt be careful not to impute to truth the

miſchiefs that belong to error; for it may be eſteemed an inconteſtable maxim, that *truth is never miſchievous.* It neither has nor can have any tendency to create diſorder or to engender miſery.—Truth is indeed the perfection of order, and the conſummation of happineſs; the higheſt attainment of reaſon, and the ſublimeſt enjoyment of man.

There cannot be a more abſurd or ruinous notion entertained than this,—That truth is occaſionally pernicious. Truth and falſhood are not of a changeable but a fixed nature. The firſt is eſſentially and radically good; the laſt is eſſentially and radically bad; independant of all local and temporal relations whatever. In the firſt therefore conſiſts the happineſs, in the laſt the miſery of man; and no modification of circumſtances ought, for a moment, to be permitted to ſet aſide the ſacredneſs of truth, or the ignominy of falſhood.

If we were once to admit that any accidental relations whatever can alter the nature or deform the beauty of truth, we are guilty of denying it's fixed and unchangeable eſſence. Truth ought not to ſtoop to political or to individual convenience.—To pretend that

what is truth to-day may be falſhood and error in a change of circumſtances, is to ſubvert, at one blow, all the relations that bind men together in ſociety. We are changing a fixed and immoveable criterion of human actions, for one that is as precarious as the winds. Political convenience is ſhifting every hour; and if truth be to ſhift with it, and to follow it in all it's eccentricities, there is an end to it's exiſtence. It is truth no longer; for truth implies immutability.

Political and private convenience ought to bend to truth; not truth to them; and of this be aſſured, O ye ſons of Adam! that public happineſs will reſt upon a quickſand, till ye are univerſally convinced that ye can have *no intereſt diſtinct from truth*, and that it alone is the immortal baſis of public and private glory!!!

Truth, being of a fixed unalterable nature, and as oppoſite to falſhood as miſery is to happineſs, it ought not to be tampered with.

It ought not to be made the ſupple cameleon-like changeling of individual or political whim and artifice. Nor ought it *ever to be concealed.* To ſuppreſs the

lively orracles or to veil the divine image of truth, in order to ſerve any paltry ends of human policy, is to outrage the God of truth.

It was either a falſe delicacy or a deſigning diſhoneſty which gave riſe to this maxim:—"Truth ought not to be ſpoken at all times. Moral truth,—that truth which is of an eternal and unperiſhable influence, ought neither to be ſhrouded in myſtery or to be frittered away in ambiguity.—Truth, *the whole truth*, ſhould be diſplayed to the world, not tricked out with the harlotry of artifice; but beautiful in it's naked ſimplicity. —The currency of gold may be aſſiſted by a portion of alloy; but truth ſhines brighteſt when undebaſed by error.

Were the nature and properties of truth juſtly appreciated, and it's eternal value rightly underſtood, there would be no occaſion for any of it's champions to lay down their lives upon it's altar; but, at preſent, while error is ſo much careſſed, and falſhood ſo ſtoutly defended by corrupt and intereſted hirelings, it is neceſſary that the votaries of truth ſhould be ready and willing to bleed in it's defence.

We ſhould bear witneſs to the truth "looking unto Jeſus," whoſe lips were never polluted with a falſhood; and who taught his diſciples that thoſe ſhall gain life, who lay it down for his ſake; or for the fixed, eternal and unchangeable truths which he promulgated; and which it is our duty to maintain, with unſhaken courage, and at the expenſe of every worldly intereſt.

A PICTURE OF
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

A future life—an immaterial principle—the truth of the reſurrection of Jeſus—practical inferences, &c. &c.

FEW arguments for a future life are ſupplied by the view of nature. The world around us ſeems a perpetual ſtruggle between life and death; a ſcene of inceſſant decay; a ſcheme of deſtruction always going on, and never completed.

The race of man appears as if born only to die. Succeſſive generations ſucceſſively diſappear, and moulder into duſt like their fathers. Virtue and vice, learning and ignorance obey the common ſentence of mortality, and meet together in the grave.

What conſtitutes the ſpirit of man, or whether there be, in man, any ſpirit, diſtinct from his animal organization, the light of nature glimmering and dubious, cannot unfold to us. The human mind is often ſtored with many ſublime ideas; it's conceptions ſoaring above worldly objects, at times, ſeem like the emanations of Pure Intelligence; yet there are ſome phyſical reaſons for ſuppoſing that this very mind which ſeems impregnated, as it were, with fire from heaven, is no more than the reſult of the harmonious combination and vigorous exerciſe of material organs.* Our ideas are,

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* We excel the brutes in no organ ſo much as that of touch; and which is the reaſon why our ſenſations are more exquiſite than theirs. Perhaps men differ from each other in nothing more than in the greater or leſs excitability of their ſenſe of touch; and, conſequently, in the greater or leſs delicacy and diſtinctneſs of their ſenſations.

Perception is only a modification of ſenſation; and perceptions are ſtrong and vivid, as ſenſations are diſtinct and lively. Thus the man of genius differs from others principally in the faculty of ſenſation.

Our ſenſes of viſion, hearing, ſmelling, taſting may probably conſiſt in a greater excitability of the ſame power, which conſtitutes touch, reſiding in the eye, the ear, the palate, &c. &c. Thus in the olfactory nerves this power may be ſo exquiſitely refined as to be excitable by inviſible effluvia; in the nerves of the ear by the leaſt vibrations of the air; in the nerves of ſight by impreſſions as delicate and impalpable as the reflection of objects on the retina.

according to the opinions of the moſt acute philoſophers, the produce only of the ſenſes; and the ſenſes themſelves are evidently organic fibres, capable of excitement by their proper ſtimuli.

Our ſenſes are our only poſſible means of communication with the external world or with ourſelves. In other words, it is only through the medium of ſenſe, that we can obtain any knowledge of the world without us; and that we can attend to the reflex operations of our own minds. Take from man the ſenſe of feeling, hearing, taſting, ſmelling, ſeeing, he would be deſtitute of ideas, and incapable of reflection. It is, by means of our ſenſes, that we are able to retrace the ideas, with which they originally brought us acquainted, to diverſify their forms, and to arrange them under ſuch new

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The ſuppoſition, that all our ſenſes are only modifications of one and the ſame power (but which in particular organs, as the eye, the ear, the palate, is made ſuſceptible of different degrees of excitement) accounts for that parity and, as it were, unity of ſenſation, which conſtitutes, what may be called, ſelf-feeling.—Hence we can, at the ſame time, have the enjoyment of hearing, ſeeing, ſmelling, &c. without any confuſion or indiſtinctneſs of ſenſation; which would happen, if there were not ultimately and eſſentially unity in the ſenſorial power.

combinations, as that they ſometimes appear to have no relation to any thing in nature, and to be the ſimple, ſpontaneous, unmixed progeny of the mind. But we can have no ideas that have not a ſenſual original.

It may be ſaid, that our abſtract ideas, as virtue, &c. which have no relation to ſenſible images, are attained, not through the medium of the ſenſes of ſeeing, &c. but in ſome meaſure, by a total oblivion that we have ſuch ſenſes, or by a ſuſpenſion of their operation. This error ſeems to ſpring from not conſidering, that all ideas, even thoſe which are moſt complex, are nothing more than the combination of many particular ideas, and which are the offspring of individual and ſimple ſenſation.

In figures, we conſider a collection of many particulars as conſtituting unity;—as, for inſtance, when we ſay a thouſand, or a million. Theſe are complex terms, of which, when we mention them in a rapid and curſory manner, we have no preciſe ideas, and can have none, till we reſolve them into thoſe ſimple and individual terms, of which they are abbreviations. It is the ſame in what are called abſtract terms. When we men-

tion the term, *virtue*, we have no fixed or definite ideas of the thing itſelf, till we come to conſider it, as it were, under it's individual perſonalities, it's numerous ſubdiviſions, and to ſum up the particular terms, of which it is an abbreviation. Abſtract terms ought to be always conſidered as abbreviations of many particulars; in the ſame manner as the term *a thouſand* is of ſo many units. The neceſſity of theſe abbreviations ariſes from the limited capacity of the mind, which cannot attend to many particulars at once, and which, therefore, for the ſake of expediting it's operations, that would otherwiſe be infinitely ſlow and tedious, has recurred to the invention of general and abſtract terms.

As to abſtract ideas, there are, in fact, no ſuch things. An idea, means a diſtinct perception; and thoſe perſons, whoſe ideas are rather confuſed and fluttering vibrations, than diſtinct and definite perceptions, will find them but of little ſervice, and producing ignorance rather than knowledge. Now when we mention any abſtract idea, as virtue, what diſtinct perception have we of the thing itſelf? It is a word which we may eaſily pronounce; but of which, in fact, we can hardly have more definite notions than a parrot, till we have

reſolved it into it's ſeveral, ſimple, conſtituent ideas, and traced it through it's individual and particular relations. But having once done this, and having obtained, as it were, diſtinct perceptions of the meaning of the general term, we may, afterwards, apply it either in writing, or converſation, or reflection, with as much preciſion and advantage, as if all the particulars it includes were, at that very moment, preſent to the mind. *

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* This ſhews the neceſſity of fixing a preciſe and definite ſignification to words; or otherwiſe, we muſt write and talk we know not what, like magpies and parrots. Some perſons ſay, "if you have ideas you will never want words;" but the contrary rather holds good; for we can have but very few ideas without words; and as all our ideas, if we had no language, would be ſimple ſenſations, we could carry on no long train or proceſs of reaſoning, any more than we could count far without figures, or ſigns to expreſs the different combinations of unity.

Thoſe who can annex to each word they uſe it's definite and appropriate ſignification cannot be barren of ideas.

As the majority of our ideas have not a real, palpable and independant exiſtence, their vitality, if I may ſo expreſs it, conſiſts merely in the ſymbols, which give them a "local habitation and a name." Thoſe, therefore, who poſſeſs preciſe and definite notions of the meaning of theſe ſymbols, can hardly help being rich in ideas.

A mere vapid declaimer may indeed eructate all the froth of verboſe oratory, though without accurately knowing, or rightly diſcriminating the terms he uſes; but to uſe words with fitneſs, and ſo as to excite diſtinct perceptions, and to combine them with beauty ſo as to fill the mind, not with diſproportioned and monſtrous, but with natural and ſymmetrical images, ſhews a juſt taſte and a well-regulated underſtanding.

If we have no ideas whatever that are not derived from the organs of ſenſe, mere natural reaſon would, at firſt ſight, lead us to conjecture that the mind periſhes with the body. If the mind be a part, though the moſt perfect part of our animal organization, it ſeems neceſſarily involved in it's deſtruction.

But, perhaps, it will be ſaid, that, though all our ideas are the product of the ſenſes, there is in man a principle eſſentially different from the organs of ſenſe; and that this principle is volition. †

The practice, therefore, of beginning education by teaching the preciſe ſignification of words is the beſt and moſt philoſophic method. But, as words are the ſymbols of ſenſations, means ſhould be taken, as much as poſſible, by means of diagrams and other contrivances, to excite the particular ſenſations they expreſs. In other words—children ſhould be made to acquire diſtinct perceptions of the terms they uſe. The progreſs of mind would then be greatly accelerated; the human underſtanding, no longer liable to be bewildered in the maze of crude half-formed notions, would not remain in a ſtate of childhood, as it now often does, from infancy to old age.

† Volition, is that faculty which, according to the energy with which it operates in the individual, cauſes the intellectual faculties to act with greater or leſs vigor, and produces the various degrees of mental capacity.

But let us conſider whether volition itſelf be a principle diſtinct from our animal organization, or only a product of it.

The object of moſt men, in every ſphere of life, and in every direction, which the faculties take, is agreeable ſenſation. This is the ultimate end of all the purſuits of man; and, in queſt of this, he willingly incurs many diſagreeable ſenſations, which are often intermediate ſteps to the object he deſires. The deſire of pleaſure, though at a diſtance, often overcomes the averſion to intermediate pain; and which may exceed the pleaſure in reality, though not in the eſtimation of the purſuer.

We are led, probably, by early ſympathies, which give a peculiarly ſtrong and laſting impulſe to individual deſire, to aſſociate the idea of agreeable ſenſation, in a more eſpecial manner, with this or that particular purſuit. This cauſes us to purſue it with eagerneſs; it rouſes the faculty of volition to endeavour, as it were, to ſeize it by great exertions.

It is a common and every-day expreſſion, that men can do well what they have a genius for; which means no more than this;—that men can do well what they like to do well; or, in other words—that they uſually excel moſt in that particular purſuit or employ, which ſympathy or habit has made a ſource of agreeable ſenſation.

Agreeable ſenſation is the ſtrongeſt ſtimulus that can be uſed to excite volition; and the proficiency of men in any attainment, whether of art or ſcience, is always in a direct proportion to the degree of voluntary power employed in it. "Poſſunt quia poſſe videntur." A ſtrong degree of volition overpowers difficulties, which would appal the timid; and from which the luke-warm would ſhrink with diſmay.

Hence, Genius may be created. If you can once make a child firmly believe that his greateſt happineſs reſides in this or that particular purſuit; or, in other words, that ſuch purſuit will be the means of a greater ſum of agreeable ſenſation than any other, it will become to him an object that will prompt to vehement deſire, and to vigorous exertion. A thouſand

We are made by nature exquiſitely ſenſible to pleaſure and to pain. Hence we become acquainted both with agreeable and with diſagreeable ſenſations; and we can-

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aſſociations, all flowing from, or connected with agreeable ſenſation, and directed towards the favourite object, will conſpire to call forth more than ordinary energies of action.

Why do children uſually love their play-things better than their books, but, becauſe the former are to them a more prolific ſource of agreeable ſenſation? If their books poſſeſſed a greater power of agreeable ſenſation, they would throw away their play-things, as eagerly as they now uſually lay aſide their books. Hence, the motto for children's books ought to be, "delectare et prodeſſe;" and in the firſt period of childhood, at leaſt, no books ſhould be put into their hands which do not tend to improve them, by combining inſtruction with pleaſurable ſenſation.

If you wiſh your child to excel in any particular purſuit, you muſt learn *artfully to manage the exciting power of ſympathy*; you muſt endeavour, in very early life, to aſſociate in his mind, with the object of excellence, every poſſible idea of agreeable ſenſation; which will act as a perpetual and continually increaſing ſtimulus, urging him to exert, in that purſuit with which he has been habitually uſed to connect ſenſations of pleaſure, a peculiar and accumulated degree of voluntary power.

It is the ſtrong and powerful excitement of volition, which counteracts the "vis inertiæ," the gravitating force of ſloth, that cramps even the moral powers of man; and which imparts to the natural ſluggiſhneſs of the mind, the ſtrength, the majeſty and the ſwiftneſs of the eagle.

When a great degree of volition is excited, it always produces great exertions. Genius may be denominated, a high degree of volition employed in a particular purſuit. Hence the cauſe of the different modifications and kinds of genius.—Some connect the power of agreeable ſenſation either with poetry, or with oratory, or with any of the arts, more ſtrongly than with any other purſuit. And hence, that particular purſuit becomes their predominant propenſity. That is, always the predominant

not have been long in the world before the experience of the laſt has made us regret the abſence of the firſt.

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propenſity of men, which, by having been, in their minds, moſt habitually aſſociated with agreeable ſenſations, has become, by the powerful but inviſible agency of ſympathy, the cauſe of their greateſt happineſs.

Why was Sir Joſhua Reynolds more fond of painting, than of ſtatuary, or of hunting, or fiſhing, or any thing elſe? Certainly, becauſe from ſome ſtrong ſympathy, excited in very early life, he had been led to aſſociate more agreeable ſenſations with the uſe of his pencil and his pallet, than with any other kinds of exertion. As he advanced in life, his fondneſs for his art, probably, increaſed. The pleaſures of imagination, unlike the groſs pleaſures of ſenſe, do not pall and grow faint, but increaſe and become more vigorous, according to the frequency of indulgence.

The agreeable ſenſations which Sir Joſhua had connected with his favourite purſuit, were augmented by many adventitious ſources of pleaſure,—by habit, by fame and by all the charms commonly aſſociated with celebrity. All theſe agreeable ſenſations were, in ſome meaſure, blended into unity; and produced an extraordinary degree of volition, which increaſed the power of excellence.

Men never purſue with that eagerneſs and ardor which is neceſſary to the attainment of excellence, or to ſplendor of ſucceſs, any thing which is not aſſociated in their minds with agreeable ſenſations, or with the idea of preſent or the hope of future happineſs.

Hence, genius often droops without a certain degree of encouragement; becauſe deſpair tends to baniſh agreeable ſenſation, which is the ſource of increaſed volition, and, conſequently, of increaſed activity of mind. On the other hand, great and extraordinary encouragement, or an unexpected acceſſion of wealth, or of the means by which a great ſource of enjoyment is at once put into our poſſeſſion, often tends, in the ſame degree, to produce languor, and relax exertion.

The poſſeſſion of great temporal advantages, increaſing the power of gratification, too uſually cauſes ſenſual to abſorb the deſire of mental plea-

From the ſenſations of pleaſure or of pain, ſprings deſire or averſion: and hence originates volition; which

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ſure; and, beſides, we muſt conſider that it is not ſo much the poſſeſſion of pleaſure, as the deſire, combined with the hope of obtaining it, that ſtimulates to extraordinary activity.

That volition, which is the central fire of genius, is not ſo much kindled by objects, that are near and only a hand's-breath from us, as by thoſe which are leſs diſtinct, and can only be ſeen, as it were, twinkling at the edge of the horizon.

Many a man of genius would have experienced a diminution of his energy, or an averſion rather than a deſire to exert it, if he had enjoyed the full extent of thoſe advantages, for which, perhaps, he anxiouſly ſighed, and had been rewarded to the full boundary of his merit by penſions and emoluments.

Neceſſity, is the cradle in which genius is moſt frequently fondled to maturity. If the royal patronage did not impair the faculties of Johnſon, at leaſt it produced, except in one or two inſtances, a great unwillingneſs to exert them. His two great works, his Dictionary and his Rambler, of which the laſt will tranſmit his name to poſterity, were produced in a ſtate of indigence.

It would be a nice and moſt uſeful calculation, which ſhould fix, what degree of encouragement ought to be afforded to men of genius, and which would rather invigorate than depreſs the active principle.

There have been, indeed, inſtances in which no encouragement, however great, and no neglect, however diſtreſſing, could, in the leaſt, weaken the energies of the mind, or ſlacken the activity of purſuit. In theſe caſes, an impetuous and overbearing deſire of fame, rather than of the emoluments of fortune, has been aſſociated with the object of purſuit, and rendered, by ſympathy, the only ſource of agreeable ſenſation; and as this deſire of fame can never be ſatisfied, but uſually increaſes in proportion to it's gratification, it imparts to the volition an aſtoniſhing energy, and awakens all the powers of the ſoul to unwearied activity. It was this

is nothing more than the practical energy either of desire or of aversion. Volition, then, is the necessary result of the peculiar organization of our bodies. Possessing a frame so exquisitely adapted to the gentle or the violent impulses of pleasure or of pain, we, necessarily, will the one positively, and the other negatively.

Volition, is the ultimate result of sensation; and, accordingly, all animals * possess it, though in a far less degree than man, and proportioned to their degree of

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love of fame which, in Milton, overcame obstacles that were almost insurmountable; and communicated to his genius a vigor more than mortal.

It is the passion for fame, that often renders the active principle capable of incredible exertions. Thus the truly-ambitious man, — he who feels in his bosom the ever-burning flame of that devouring passion, is commonly, in those pursuits in which his ambition centres, the most vigilant and indefatigable of men.

The reader will, I trust, pardon the length of this note, from it's relation to a subject of infinite importance to human happiness, I mean, — the *economy of mind*, — the most interesting topic in the whole sphere of human enquiry. — At some future period, I hope that I may have health and leisure to say more on this subject.

* The comparative feebleness of the voluntary power, in brutes, seems, to me, to be in a great measure owing to the greater comparative numbness, and, as it were, *locality* of their sense of touch, — that sense whose vitality and delicacy is present in almost every part of the human body.

irritability and ſenſibility. Natural reaſon, therefore, arguing from the nature of man, can by no means prove that volition is a principle diſtinct from the material tiſſue of the animal economy, or that it ſurvives it's decay.

The voluntary power, whether it relates to the production of muſcular or mental action, evidently ſympathiſes with the declenſion of the power of animal life. As the fibres of our bodies, whether from the effects of intemperance, or ſickneſs, or from the withering touches of age, become leſs irritable, volition grows more feeble.

Nothing can prove this more ſtrongly than the decay of the memory* in drunkards and in old people; in whom, as the ſenſual fibres become leſs irritable to natural ſtimuli,

* Strength of memory, depends on ſtrength of volition; and which again depends on the degree of ſenſation, by which it is excited. Thus we may account for the diverſity of memories. All perſons incline to remember, with moſt diſtinctneſs and accuracy, that which they have been moſt frequently uſed to aſſociate, in their minds, with pleaſurable ſenſations. Theſe ſenſations invigorate the voluntary power; and which, in it's turn, impels and invigorates the power of memory.

and particularly to pleaſurable ſenſation, the voluntary power becomes proportionally impaired. Memory is, indeed, only a modification of the voluntary power, reviving, according to the degree of it's energy, the paſt aſſociations of the ſenſual fibres.

It has been ſaid above, that the ſtrength of volition depends greatly on the power of ſenſation; ſo it is remarkable, that old people can often more readily recal the events of their youth, than the tranſactions of yeſterday; becauſe the former have been more connected with agreeable ſenſations. Theſe inſpire the volition with an energy ſufficient to revive the aſſociations of youth; while it, in vain, ſtrives to bring back more recent impreſſions. They elude the graſp of the will, and flit into eternal oblivion, like the dreams of the morning.

From what has been ſaid on this ſubject, we muſt, I think, come to this concluſion—That our ſuſceptibility of pleaſure or pain, by exciting deſire or averſion, neceſſarily creates volition. Volition, therefore, being in itſelf an effect, cannot ſurvive it's cauſe; which, in an ultimate analyſis, will be found to conſiſt in the

power of irritation and ſenſation; or, in other words, the vital principle (whatever it may be) which is inherent in all animal bodies, but more nicely modified in, and more exquiſitely combined with thoſe of the human ſpecies.

But it may be ſaid, that we poſſeſs a principle of conſciouſneſs diſtinct from the principle of volition; and though connected with, by no means produced by, or reſulting from our animal organization.

There ſeems a good deal of ſimilitude between memory and conſciouſneſs;* but they are not eſſentially

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* The author of Zoonomia ſays, vol. i. 132. "We are only conſcious of our exiſtence when we think about it; as we only perceive the lapſe of time when we attend to it; when we are buſied about other objects, neither the lapſe of time nor the conſciouſneſs of our own exiſtence can occupy our attention."

We appear never for a moment to be without the conſciouſneſs of perſonality; though *we do not always attend to it ſo far as to make it a ſubject of reflection.* All reflection is an exertion of volition, but not the ſmalleſt effort of volition is neceſſary to excite the idea of perſonality, unleſs when we deſire to identify our preſent with our paſt being.—And I am inclined to believe, that the conſciouſneſs of perſonality is attached, though by an inviſible and impalpable chain, to every one of our ideas; and is aſſociated, even without our perceiving it, with every change that

the ſame. Memory retraces the perceptions and relations of paſt time; but the power of conſcioufneſs concentrates our paſt ſenſations and perceptions in unity of time and place; and binds together the diverſity of our organic motions, in the perception of individuality or undivided perſonality. It is the power of conſcioufneſs which makes the preſent and the paſt contemporaneous, and incorporates all our notions and ſenſations in one ſimple notion and ſenſation of identity. *

There is a daily and hourly waſte of our frame. †

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happens in the ſenſory. The contrary ſuppoſition would, at leaſt, corroborate that theory of ideas which was maintained by the acuteneſs of Berkeley and of Hume.

* May not *identity* have two ſignifications? one implying a ſenſation of our preſent individuality, the other connecting the idea of our preſent individuality with our paſt exiſtence?

† In the centre of every individual, there ſeems a conſuming power, which is continually oppoſing, and which finally deſtroys the power of life. Individuals ſoon periſh, if the daily aſſimilation do not balance the daily waſte. As the ſtrength of the ſtomach and inteſtines to aſſimilate the food we take to the animal matter of our bodies declines, the flame of animal life, wanting nutriment, grows fainter and fainter, till it is totally extinguiſhed.

An inceſſant change is continually going on in us; and we never riſe in the morning, with preciſely the ſame bodies in which we went to bed at night.

It is remarkable, that we ſhould be conſcious that we are the ſame identic individuals now, that we were 12 or 20 years ago, when we, perhaps, retain not a ſingle particle of the ſame bodies we had then. The body keeps continually changing; but the conſciouſneſs, as far as it reſpects individuality, remains the ſame and unchanged. Neither our paſſions, our affections, our appetites, our deſires, our averſions, our judgment, our volition, our memory, continue without change;—the conſciouſneſs alone undergoes none.

Does there, not, therefore, ſeem to be, in every individual, a principle or power of conſciouſneſs,* totally

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In young, healthy and robuſt individuals, the conſuming power is conſiderably leſs than the aſſimilating. In the meridian of life, the proceſs of our deſtruction and of our renovation, keeps pretty even; at a later ſeaſon, if I may recur to a very common but apt illuſtration, our ſand runs out faſter than nature ſupplies it, or than art can renew it;—and the worm finally feaſts on our remains!!!

* The power of conſciouſneſs, though it ſhould not be immaterial, yet may be a fluid more ſubtle than light or heat, ſituated in the ſenſory, and

diſtinct from the animal organization, and by no means dependant on it, or involved in it's diſſolution? This conſciouſneſs ſeems to be the ſpiritual body which St. Paul mentions,* and which may be folded up in the natural; and which, after death, may grow and expand into a nobler exiſtence; as the butterfly diſplays it's variegated wings when the grub expires.

The natural world preſents but few arguments, or analogies, in ſupport of a continuation of individual

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ſenſible to, but not itſelf altered by the elementary changes of the mortal body. It is no ſound objection to the exiſtence of a power of conſciouſneſs in the body, that it is not always perceptible, or that it cannot be brought within the cognizance of the ſenſes. The fluid of gravitation is, probably, diffuſed through every particle of matter, and yet we neither ſee it nor feel it; nor have yet been able, by any palpable teſt, to demonſtrate it's exiſtence. We have yet proceeded no farther towards proving it's exiſtence, than can be done by alledging ſtrong arguments againſt it's non-exiſtence.

It may be objected, that if we do poſſeſs ſuch a principle of conſciouſneſs, as I have ſtated, diſtinct from our animal nature, connected with it in life, but not aſſociated with it in death, why can we not connect, by the conſciouſneſs of individuality, the earlieſt period of infancy with our preſent exiſtence? It may be anſwered, that the power of conſciouſneſs, while it remains in the body, can exert no power independant of the organs, to which it is attached; but that when death has liberated it from the manacles of fleſh, it will diſplay it's energies pure and uncontrouled.

* 1 Cor. xv. 44.

exiſtence; or in other words, of the extinction of conſciouſneſs in one ſtate of being, and of it's renewal in another. In nature, we behold a moſt abundant proviſion made for the continuance of the ſpecies, but none for that of the individual. Every thing contains the principle of reproduction, either in itſelf, or by communion with it's kind. But if the progeny ſurvive the death of the parent, they ſooner or later mingle with the duſt of their fathers.

Amid all the admirable contrivances of nature, for the reproduction of the ſpecies of all the myriads of organized nature, where ſhall we behold any for that of the ſame individual? Man himſelf ſeems to periſh like the flower of the field. He lives, perhaps, a few years; he reproduces his kind; and he vaniſhes into darkneſs. The ſame individual is ſeen no more. He eludes our touch and our viſion, like the ſhadow of the cloud that has paſſed over the earth.

The butterfly has, indeed, often been conſidered as a continuation of the individual, and an emblem of immortality. The grub, that diſguſted by it's loathſome appearance, or that crawled on the earth in ſlug-

giſh dulneſs, lies for a time in a ſtate of apparent inſenſibility and death, till, at laſt, burſting it's coffin, it reviſits the day-light, with gay and florid wings; delighting by the beauty of it's colours and the ſprightlineſs of it's movements; and exciting ſympathy in the beholder, by it's ſeeming conſciouſneſs of the agreeableneſs of it's own ſenſations. But is the butterfly at all conſcious of having been a grub?

Where, and in what part of nature, will you find the moſt remote analogy of a continuation of individual conſciouſneſs? No where;—and without ſuch a continuation, the individual is, in fact, annihilated, though the ſeveral parts of his former animal frame may paſs into a thouſand diverſe forms, ſhapes and combinations. A continuation of the ſame individuality, means an annexed conſciouſneſs, connecting preſent and paſt identity. Without this, there can be no continuation of the ſame individual.

When the individual man dies, his body, reſolving into it's primary particles, ſoon aſſimilates to the molecules of other bodies. But the individual ſuffers nothing by this proceſs of deterioration, as long as none of his

former conſcioufneſs paſſes into the vegetable or the worm. Again, ſuppoſe that the particles of the human body ſhould, immediately after death, migrate into ſome purer ſubſtance, which forms the nature of higher orders of intelligence. This ameliorated ſtate of exiſtence would, by no means, be a continuation of the ſame individual, without an annexed conſcioufneſs of paſt identity.——But ſuppoſing, as ſeems probable, that there is a principle or power of conſcioufneſs attached to every individual, diſtinct from the animal economy, and not involved in it's diſſolution, the idea of a future exiſtence becomes more ſimple and intelligible. The moment the individual periſhes, his conſcioufneſs paſſes into other regions, and allies itſelf to a more glorified body.

Some have conſidered the general expectation of a future life, which ſeems to be diffuſed over every region of the globe, and to have prevailed in all ages in the world,—as evidence of it's certainty.

The reſtleſs longing after immortality, which ſeems a cheering ſenſation, peculiar to the breaſt of man, is by no means *a proof* that ſuch a ſtate awaits us. For we are ſo organiſed, and placed in ſuch circumſtances,

that we could not well paſs through life, without this ſentiment being excited in us. Hence the untutored ſavage uſually feels it, in as much, if not more vigor than the civiliſed philoſopher.

Thoſe who are conſcious of a preſent exiſtence, and can obſerve, as all but ideots muſt, and with ſome emotions of concern, obſerve the mortality of their fellow-creatures, cannot fail of contemplating their own mortality;—conſcious that they now are, it is, at the very firſt view, revolting to the mind, to imagine a period when they ſhall not be. They are, therefore, naturally led, both by inclination and by hope, to contemplate death, not as an extinction of conſciouſneſs, but as a paſſage to another ſtate of being.

The mind of every man, who can indulge the leaſt thought on the ſubject, ſhrinks, with unſpeakable horror, from the idea of annihilation,—an eternal extinction of preſent conſciouſneſs. This feeling, which Addiſon calls the "longing after immortality," if it be not innate, is, at leaſt, a ſenſation that is always, ſooner or later, excited by the mortality, to which we are ſubject, and of which we are often obliged to be the mournful

ſpectators; and it ſeems a conſoling ray, gleaming, though at an unmeaſured diſtance, through the land of ſhadows.

Faint, however, and inconcluſive are the beſt hopes of a future ſtate, which are emitted from the light of reaſon. But, in proportion, as the intimations of ſuch a ſtate, from the analogies of nature, or the deductions of reaſon, are weak and unſatisfactory, ſo much the more probable is it, that the Almighty would vouchſafe to communicate to mankind ſuch an important truth, by a particular revelation.

Such a revelation is, therefore, a priori, and reaſoning on the attributes of benevolence, which we cannot help aſſigning to the Maker of all things, highly probable. And it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that if the Almighty had not deſigned, from the beginning, ſuch a revelation of a future ſtate of being, he would have rendered the light of nature more concluſive on the ſubject.

When we ſit down to examine the evidence of the reſurrection of Jeſus, with candour and ſerioufneſs, we can, by no means, diſpute the poſſibility of it's truth, as

ſome philoſophers have done, a priori. For the fact muſt be rather confirmed than invalidated by ſuch reaſoning. Taking a comprehenſive view of the moral world, we find that the credibility of an individual's riſing from the dead, on purpoſe to convince mankind of a future ſtate of exiſtence, is, at firſt ſight, confirmed by a thouſand probabilities. But, when we come to find the fact itſelf ſupported by the moſt concluſive evidence—the evidence a "a priori," combined with a vaſt maſs of "poſteriori" evidence, amounts to a proof, little ſhort of demonſtrative, of the truth of the thing itſelf.

No "priori" evidence can, of itſelf, either prove or diſprove the truth of any miracle; of which the reality muſt depend on the truth of the fact; and not on the preſumptions which the wiſeſt among beings, whoſe views are ſo limited as thoſe of man, can form againſt it, from previous conſiderations on the general courſe or laws of nature.

We know but little of the general laws which regulate the courſe of the natural world; and we know ſtill leſs of thoſe moral laws which regard the conduct of

intelligent beings, and the relations which may exiſt between them and the maker of all things.

Some individuals, intoxicated with the fumes of a falſe philoſophy, will deny the *preſent* interference of God in the government of the world, and the welfare of mankind; but I do not ſee how we can allow that God made the world, without, at the ſame time, agreeing that he ſuperintends it. Preſcience does not exclude providence* A moral government is not incompatible with general laws; for if we allow that thoſe laws were originally fixed by a moral governor, we muſt allow that they were, *from the beginning, adapted to moral purpoſes.* Thoſe parts, therefore, in the moral ſyſtem, which appear to us deviations from what we call the general laws of nature and ways of Providence, may be, in fact, only a part of them, though the ſight is too dim to ſee their connection. Theſe thoughts eaſily reconcile the notion of preſcience, and of an over-ruling Pro-

* Preſcience is here uſed as ſignifying fore-knowledge; Providence, as reſpecting the active preſence of God, in the government of the world, diſpoſing all things on the wiſeſt plan, and making the different diſpenſations of good and evil ſubſervient to purpoſes of benevolence.

vidence; for they are, in fact, the ſame thing; and the moſt ſubtle reaſoners will find it difficult to prove the contrary.

The comets are, certainly, as regular in their apparently eccentric orbits and devious courſe, as the planets are in their more centrical rotations; but the regularity of the latter is more perceptible; and the regularity of the former would be equally ſo, if we were not quite ſo ſhort-ſighted, and could trace them more diſtinctly though the maze of their motions in illimitable ſpace.

This may ſerve to illuſtrate the idea of the natural and moral order of the world. The former appears more regular and uniform, becauſe it is placed, as it were, more in the region of our ſenſes;—the laſt is equally regular; but as we are leſs acquainted with it's *whole ſphere of action*, and can only obſerve a few of it's minute and detached parts, it appears, to our weak ſight, a ſcene of chaos and confuſion.

The Chriſtian miracles, which are apparently irreconcileable with the general laws which prevail in the natural world, may be neceſſary links in the infinite

chain of the moral ſyſtem. They were ordained by preſcience, from the beginning; and they were accompliſhed by providence, at the appointed time.

The aſſertion of Mr. Hume, that the Chriſtian miracles muſt be neceſſarily falſe, becauſe they are devious from the general laws of nature, is one of the moſt arrogant, not to ſay, impious aſſertions that was ever made. For Mr. Hume preſumes to pronounce, on the univerſality of the laws of nature, to define the caſes to which their application is limited, and the line beyond which they have no agency.

Vain man, whoſe whole exiſtence is but a ſpeck of time, canſt thou meaſure the heights and depths of the divine preſcience? Canſt thou preſcribe the barrier which infinite wiſdom cannot paſs?

The aſſertion of Mr. Hume, that it is more probable that teſtimony ſhould be falſe than that miracles ſhould be true, is a remark which is more ſpecious than ſolid. For, in ſome caſes, the knowledge of the human mind, of the natural affections and of the ordinary motives of

human action will juſtify us in adopting the converſe of the propoſition.

In the caſe of the Chriſtian miracles, I think that a comprehenſive view of the principles of human nature will bear us out in the aſſertion, that it is more probable that the miracles themſelves ſhould be true, than that the teſtimony which was given in their defence, by the apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians, ſhould be falſe.

Omitting the conſideration of the other Chriſtian miracles, I ſhall wholly confine myſelf to that particular miracle of the reſurrection of Jeſus, on which the truth of Chriſtianity reſts, as on a baſe of adamant.

In combating the great authority of Mr. Hume, I ſhall begin with ſtating this propoſition,—that "the reſurrection of Jeſus is more likely to have been true, than the teſtimony which maintained it to have been falſe;" and this I hope to prove, to the ſatisfaction of the reader.

The fact itſelf, as I have before remarked, is rather confirmed that invalidated by conſiderations "a priori."

It is a fact, entirely conſonant to the beſt notions, which the moſt enlarged reaſon can form of the divine wiſdom and goodneſs. It is a fact, which it was worthy the ſupreme diſpoſer to eſtabliſh, in order to determine the inconcluſive reaſonings, and to fix the wavering hopes of man about a future ſtate. It is a fact, which, if it ſeem derogatory to the natural order of events, and to the general courſe of nature, was yet eſſentially requiſite to harmoniſe the chaotic confuſion that otherwiſe prevails in the moral world.

If God be a moral governor, we muſt ſuppoſe that he has placed eternal and immutable diſtinctions between virtue and vice, cruelty and benevolence; but as we do not obſerve ſuch diſtinctions here, as we do not behold happineſs invariably aſſociated with virtue, or miſery with vice, we thence infer the probability that the Almighty would vouchſafe to his creatures ſome conſolatory intelligence of another life after death, in which the irregularities of the preſent ſcheme of things will be corrected.

The knowledge of a future life is likewiſe abſolutely neceſſary to fix moral truth on a ſtrong foundation;

and to ſtrengthen moral obligations, by an eternal neceſſity and importance. For, ſuppoſing there to be no future life, morality has no other ſanctions than what temporary expedients, or than what the convenience or the caprice of individuals may beſtow. Men are let looſe at once, from all reſtraints, but thoſe few which civil ſociety impoſes, and which can never reach that depravity which lurks in the hidden chambers of the heart. It is nothing but the conviction of a future life, and of a day of recompence after death, which *can operate to the prevention of ſecret crimes*;—crimes which may be committed with civil impunity, and without any dread of temporal ſhame.—It is this conviction alone which can purify the boſom from a baſe and narrow ſelfiſhneſs, and open the heart to the pleaſures of a diſintereſted benevolence.

Where men have not the leaſt hope or expectation of a life after death, ſelf, and ſelf only will be their idol; they will not heed thoſe moral relations, in the midſt of which, man is placed; and for the contempt of which he is accountable. They will ſcoff at thoſe benevolent ſympathies which tend to approximate the intereſt of individuals to thoſe of their fellow-creatures,

He who looks to the grave, as the ſcene of endleſs annihilation, as the laſt limits of human deſtiny, will neceſſarily feel a cold averſion to every generous act of ſelf-denial, and to every great exertion in the cauſe of ſuffering humanity. Far different will it be with him, who, beholding the glorious light of eternity, ſhining beyond the "valley of the ſhadow death," connects the influence of his preſent conduct with his future condition; and aſſociates an immortal intereſt with a ſcrupulous regard to the obſervance of juſtice, and the practice of benevolence.

Of ſuch importance is the belief of a continuation of exiſtence beyond the grave! Some ſatisfactory information, on a ſubject of ſuch infinite concern, it was certainly worthy the Governor of the world to communicate; and it is ſo far probable, from previous conſiderations, that the caſe of the reſurrection of Jeſus, to which Chriſtians appeal, as the medium of this communication, is not a vain fable but a certain fact.

It now remains for us to conſider, whether the reſurrection of Jeſus be ſupported by probable and competent teſtimony.

In the firſt place, it is more natural and eaſy, from the influence of the principle of aſſociation, to ſpeak truth * than falſhood; and, perhaps, in the moſt profli-

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* Children poſſeſs naturally a love for truth and an averſion to falſhood. Were the firſt univerſally and judiciouſly encouraged, it would never be vanquiſhed by the ſecond; which, by bad management, is often changed from an averſion into an affection.

When parents puniſh their children for telling the truth, they cauſe them, in future, to take an intereſt in falſhood. Their natural antipathy to the latter vaniſhes; and, as they grow up, they learn to aſſociate it with the pleaſures of ſelf-intereſt. Parents cannot too ſoon inſtil into their children this ſound maxim of true philoſophy and genuine Chriſtianity, — that there is an intimate connection between falſhood and miſery.

If, on any occaſion, you puniſh your child, when he ingenuouſly confeſſes the truth, you will, afterwards, cauſe him to heſitate about confeſſing it; till, at laſt, perhaps, he will flatly deny it, or boldly perſiſt in a falſe aſſertion.

How ſoon does a paſſion for diſcovering the true relations of things, which is, in fact, no other than a paſſion for truth, diſcloſe itſelf in children! What is called infantine curioſity, is a ſpecies of this paſſion. It originates from a deſire to behold things in their juſt and real, not their ſeeming, relations; and is mingled with an averſion to be miſled by appearances.

You, perhaps, give your child a watch, or ſome other toy; and you almoſt immediately find a deſire excited to behold the inſide and to diſcover the true relation between that and the outſide appearance.

The principle of the love of truth in children is ſeen even in their credulity. Conſcious of their own ſincerity, they are but too apt to think others equally ſincere, till ſad experience teaches them that fraud and diſſimulation are the too prevailing characteriſtics of mankind!!!

gate liars, the number of their affirmations which are true, or which they conſcientiouſly believe ſo, greatly exceeds thoſe which are falſe, or which they wilfully pronounce with a conſciouſneſs of their untruth.

Truth to be ſpoken, and to be ſpoken with conſiſtency, requires no pains; but falſhood, by counteracting the natural ſentiments, and by being counteracted by thoſe numerous aſſociations of ideas, which ſerve as preſervatives to veracity, cannot be maintained, with any ſteadineſs, without *extraordinary exertions*.

Men are never impoſtors and liars *without a motive*; and, as there always is, in every individual, from cauſes which attach to his organization, a deſire to ſpeak the truth, *that motive* must be stronger than the biaſs of nature and aſſociation, which inclines him to truth and ſincerity. *

* The doctrine of counteracting motives, has never yet been ſufficiently conſidered or elucidated. Could we aſcertain the force of oppoſing motives, which are, as oppoſing powers at the two ends of a beam, with an accuracy approaching to algebraic preciſion, we might then reduce the competency or incompetency, the truth or falſhood of teſtimony to mathematical certainty.

The primary and moſt important queſtion, which ariſes in conſidering the truth of the reſurrection of Jeſus, is this; ſuppoſing the fact a ſcandalous impoſture, what motive could the apoſtles have had, ſufficient to counteract their natural love of truth, and to make them attempt to palm upon the world an unfounded falſhood?

Happineſs or agreeable ſenſation, either in poſſeſſion or reverſion, is the common incitement to human action. Now, what intereſt could the apoſtles have had, in this aſſertion, that "Jeſus was riſen from the grave?"—an aſſertion which involved them in an unexampled ſeries of perſecutions and ſufferings?

In the time of the Apoſtles, the love of life was as ſtrong a principle of action as it is at preſent. The love of life is perhaps the ſtrongeſt principle in our nature. It is that which commences with the firſt beat of the heart and continues to it's laſt. Associated with the love of life is the deſire of enjoying it, or, in other words, of agreeable ſenſation. The combination of theſe two powers energiſes the principle of ſelf-intereſt.

This principle of ſelf-intereſt is never totally extinguiſhed in the human breaſt. It is often, as it were, dormant; but is never dead. It is a fire, which is ſometime ſeen beaming benignly, at others burning deſtructively; and fuel is never wanting in the heart to keep it in a ſtate either of ſlow and gentle, or of furious and violent combuſtion.

It is to the principle of ſelf-intereſt, that the motives of human action may always be traced; though, in ſome actions, we are obliged to aſcend to the parent ſource by a much more circuitous rout than in others. Self-intereſt is a fountain, from which flow a variety of ſtreams, meandering in a thouſand directions.—Thus, ſelf-intereſt operates differently in different individuals; ſome purſue a real and palpable, others a propable and apparent intereſt; ſome a preſent, others a future and diſtant intereſt.

The great difference, therefore, between good and bad men is, that the latter act ſolely with a view to a preſent, the former more with a view to a future intereſt and reward. While the one purſues happineſs through the medium of ſenſuality, the other purſues it through

the medium of benevolence, or of agreeable ſenſation, moral and refined.

That the Apoſtles had no *preſent intereſt* in view when they affirmed, at the hazard of life and all it's enjoyments, that Jeſus was riſen from the dead, cannot be denied. Their motives muſt, therefore, be referred to a future intereſt,—an intereſt which they were not to taſte till after death. Now the only probable ground on which this expectation could be raiſed, was the conviction of this truth, that Jeſus was riſen from the dead; and this conviction muſt have been ſtrong and well-grounded indeed, when it could enable them to ſubdue thoſe propenſities of ſenſe, which urge men to worldly pleaſures; and when it could cauſe the hope of a future and inviſible joy to abſorb the energetic paſſion of the love of life, which ſo wonderfully ſtrengthens the power of a preſent ſelf-intereſt.

Were the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians ſo totally different in their nature from other men, that they acted not from the love of pleaſure but of pain, not of happineſs but of miſery? Did they ſeek theſe things for their own ſakes?—for allowing the reſurrection to have been

their own fiction, we can aſſign no other motives whatever to their conduct; but if we allow the fact, we ſhall then find an eaſy and ſimple ſolution of their behaviour; and it admits of an explanation from the known principles of human nature,—*principles, from which man never deviates, any more than the planets from their orbits.* The Apoſtles did not purſue pain and ſuffering for their own ſakes; agreeable ſenſation was as much the object of their exertions as it is of human activity in general; but, in order to obtain it, they voluntarily encountered a long and dreary ſtate *of intermediate affliction.* They clearly ſaw that much preſent miſery lay before them, but that glory and immortality awaited them, at the end of their labours. Their conduct, therefore, was regulated more by a future than a preſent ſelf-intereſt; by agreeable ſenſation after death rather than before it.

Allowing the conduct of the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians to have been ſuch, as ſacred and profane hiſtory concur to repreſent it,—and, moreover, allowing the general principles and ruling motives of human action to have been the ſame then, that they are at preſent,—the truth of the reſurrection of Jeſus becomes eſtabliſhed

by proofs which do not come far ſhort of demonſtrative certainty.

The degree of aſſent which we give to teſtimony ought, certainly, to be proportioned to the credibility of the witneſſes, and to their compatibility. The credit due to the witneſſes for any fact is according to their character for veracity, and to the means they had of knowing the truths they aſſert. I do not ſee how the credibility of the witneſſes of the reſurrection can be impeached, either by their want of integrity, or common ſenſe, or competent information.

In aſſerting ſuch a fact, they could not, as we have ſeen, have been biaſſed by any baſe motives of ſelf-intereſt; for ſelf-intereſt inclined the other way; and we cannot, for a moment, imagine that they themſelves were deceived, or that their ſenſes were impoſed on.

The death of Jeſus, on the croſs, was a ſubject of public notoriety. Of this the Apoſtles had palpable demonſtration; and they had proof, equally demonſtrative, of his reſurrection. And they were not diſpoſed

to aſſent to ſuch a fact, without ſuch evidence as was fully ſatisfactory, and which could not be diſputed.

Credulity, which has rendered ſo many the dupes of impoſture, was far from being a trait in the characters of the Apoſtles. Inſtead of inclining to a faculty of of belief, *they were rather diſpoſed to indulge doubts and to entertain cavils.* The moſt aſtoniſhing miracles could *hardly conquer their unbelief.* "O fools," ſaid Jeſus, "and ſlow of heart to believe!" Luke xxiv. 25.

Though Jeſus had repeatedly declared to his diſciples, that he ſhould riſe again from the grave,* yet theſe declarations made but little impreſſion on them. After his crucifixion, they ſeem to have mourned and wept, as for one whom they ſhould ſee no more! Mark xvi. 10. And even after that they had been told, by Mary Magdalene, that Jeſus was riſen; St. Mark informs us, that *they believed not;* and St. Luke xxiv. 11. ſays, that *her words ſeemed to them as idle tales.*

* Vid. Matt. xx. 19. xxvi. 32.

Thus we ſee that the Apoſtles were, by no means, diſpoſed to believe, that Jeſus was riſen from the grave, *without ſufficient evidence*. They were too incredulous to have been made the dupes of impoſture, even if any had been attempted. But Jeſus gave the Apoſtles the moſt convincing proofs that his reſurrection was neither a deceitful fabrication nor an ideal ſuppoſition—"Behold," ſaid he to them, Luke xxiv. "my hands and my feet, that it is I, myſelf; handle me and ſee me." He did not appear to them in a viſion of the night, when the vigilant and ſcrutiniſing powers of man are ſuſpended; and the imagination, liberated from all reſtraint, is abandoned to the illuſions of an ideal world. He did not appear *to one individual only*, in a ſtate of ſolitude; when his terrors might have overpowered his judgment. But he appeared to the eleven diſciples, as they were aſſembled together; and offered himſelf to be handled and ſeen; that they might be aſſured, that he was not a mere phantom, conjured up by their own imagination. On this occaſion, St. Luke xxiv. 41. tells us, that at firſt "*they believed not for joy*." How natural and how lively is this repreſentation of the Evangeliſts! The events which we ardently deſire, and yet but little expect we can hardly bring ourſelves to believe,

when they come to paſs. The fulneſs of our joy almoſt inclines us to doubt our own ſenſes, and to diſtruſt the reality of our good fortune.

That the impreſſion, made on the minds of the Apoſtles, might not be obliterated, and that every doubt which they could poſſibly entertain of the truth of his reſurrection might be diſſipated, Jeſus appeared to them at ſeveral other times;—once when he convinced Thomas, who was not preſent at his firſt appearance, John xx. again, John xxi. he ſhewed himſelf to the diſciples, at the ſea of Tiberias; when he converſed and eat and drank with them; and again, in Bethany, when he aſcended into heaven, in the preſence of five hundred of the brethren; of whom many were living when St. Paul wrote his Firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians.

Thus we ſee that the reſurrection of Jeſus was confirmed by indiſputable teſtimony, by witneſſes, *not in the leaſt credulous or biaſſed, and who refuſed to admit it's truth till they could no longer doubt it.*

The bold and *diſintereſted* declarations of the truth of the reſurrection, which the Apoſtles made in the pre-

ſence of thoſe by whom Jeſus had been crucified, and ſoon after that event, deſerve particular attention.

St. Peter, in a ſpeech which he delivered on the day of Pentecoſt, Acts ii. reſolutely and undoubtingly affirms the truth of the reſurrection; and this he does, in defiance of that infamous lie, which the Jewiſh rulers had propagated, That the diſciples had ſtolen the body. The Apoſtle then tells them, "That God had raiſed up that Jeſus whom they, by wicked hands, had crucified and ſlain." Obſerve what a ſolemn conviction of this important truth, muſt have influenced the Apoſtle at this moment, and how fearleſs this conviction made him! For, *the mere aſſertion of the fact, at ſuch a time*, was a charge of atrocious murder and of ſhameleſs falſhood, againſt the whole Jewiſh government; who had firſt put Jeſus to death, and then fabricated a lie, to conceal the truth of his reſurrection. Was it probable, then, that any one of the Apoſtles * would thus have

* Conſider the puſillanimity of the Apoſtles, *before the reſurrection* (when they *all forſook their maſter*, and one poſitively denied him), and compare it with their open avowal of him, *after his reſurrection*, — an avowal which no menace nor perſecution could, *for a moment*, induce them to retract.

dared to criminate thoſe, who had ſo lately nailed their maſter to the croſs, if they had not been aſſured, by irrefragable proofs, that Jeſus had triumphed over the grave, and that opened to them a way from temporal pains to immortal happineſs?—When the Apoſtles had miraculouſly healed a man, who had been a cripple from his birth, St. Peter told the admiring Jews, that they had not performed this cure through their own power, or holineſs; but "through faith in the name of the Prince of life, whom God had raiſed up, of which they were witneſſes." Acts iii. 15.—In the ivth of Acts, we read, that the Apoſtles were apprehended for having preached, through Jeſus, the reſurrection from the dead: being carried before the great council, they were required to tell, by what means they had made the impotent man whole. Not in the leaſt diſmayed, they boldly declared, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Iſrael, that by the name of Jeſus Chriſt, whom ye crucified, whom God raiſed from the dead, even by him doth this man ſtand before you whole. Neither is there ſalvation in any other," &c. This is the undaunted language of conſcious truth. When the Apoſtles were diſmiſſed from the council, they were peremptorily ordered, neither to preach nor teach any more in the

name of Jeſus. But Peter and John, unmoved by the menace, anſwered, that " they could not but ſpeak the things *which they had ſeen and heard.*

Another illuſtrious witneſs of the reſurrection is St. Paul. To ſuppoſe that St. Paul, a man of ſtrong natural ſagacity, verſed in all the learning of the Jews, animated with the zeal of the Phariſees, and burning with rage againſt the Chriſtians, ſhould, *in a moment*, and *without any cauſe adequate to a divine influence*, become the ſtrenuous and indefatigable advocate of that religion which he had ſo bitterly perſecuted;—to ſuppoſe that he ſhould, *in an inſtant*, renounce all thoſe notions in which he had been brought up, and the prejudices of the ſect, to which he had been ſo warmly attached, is utterly incredible, and contrary to the well-known principles of human nature, and motives of human conduct. His ſudden and extraordinary converſion, can only be accounted for by allowing the truth of that miraculous interpoſition of divine power, which is recorded by St. Luke, and which is corroborated by the voluntary teſtimony of St. Paul himſelf. The Apoſtle of the Gentiles was convinced that the tale of the Jewiſh rulers was an artful endeavour, to ſuppreſs the glorious

truth of the reſurrection; for he ſaw and converſed with that Jeſus whom they had crucified.

But it may be ſaid, that, allowing the Apoſtles to have been, in every reſpect, credible and competent witneſſes; we cannot be aſſured that their teſtimony, as recorded in the Goſpels and Acts, &c. is that which they delivered to the world. It may be alledged that the validity of teſtimony decreaſes, in proportion to the diſtance from the time when it was firſt delivered, or that the probability of it's truth is inverſely as it's diſtance. This objection, though it poſſeſſes ſome weight, yet will be found not to have much, in the caſe of that teſtimony, which the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians gave to the truth of the reſurrection.

The authority of teſtimony is, by no means, diminiſhed by the lapſe of time, unleſs it can be proved, that it has been either mutilated or corrupted in it's deſcent. If this cannot be proved, it's authority remains, at the end of a thouſand years, as ſtrong, and eſſentially as convincing as it was at the beginning.

When we conſider, therefore, the evidence, by which

the truth of the reſurrection is eſtabliſhed, we ought to inquire whether there be any proof of it's having been altered in it's deſcent from it's original ſource?

Of the writers, whoſe written teſtimony, in favour of the reſurrection, has come down to us, we have not the leaſt grounds for preſuming that the relation has experienced any material changes or depredation, in it's tranſmiſſion through ſo many centuries.

The ſacred books were preſerved with ſcrupulous fidelity; and the diſſentions, that begun to prevail in the Chriſtian church, even in the age of the Apoſtles, greatly contributed to maintain the purity and integrity of the text, in all points of conſequence. Had the Chriſtian church continued, from it's firſt beginning to the preſent time, undiſturbed by the jealouſies of ſchiſm, or the commotions of faction, the charge, That the text of the ſacred books had been, at different periods, mutilated and perverted, to ſuit the intereſted views of prieſtly artifice, might have been urged by the ſkeptic with more force and plauſibility; and could not ſo readily have been refuted. But, *fortunately*, Divine Providence ſo ordered it, *that differences of opinion ſhould prevail in the*

church from it's earlieſt periods; and theſe differences have not only prevented the religious principle from ſinking into a fatal languor, but have eminently contributed to preſerve, pure and inviolate from profane hands, the text of the ſacred writers. For, had one party attempted to alter the books of the Evangeliſts, to ſuit their private views, and to give a preponderance of authority to their favourite opinions, their attempts would inſtantly have been expoſed by the adverſe faction; the cry of ſacrilege would have been raiſed, which would have brought ſhame and deriſion on thoſe, whoſe audacity had perpetrated ſuch an outrage on the holy volume.

In the various diſſentions, about forms of faith and points of doctrine, which have taken place in the Chriſtian church, and which certainly have not been characteriſed by liberality, or ſoftened by mildneſs, all parties *appealed to the ſame authority*,—the records of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts; and ſeem to have combined, notwithſtanding their mutual animoſities, to preſerve them pure and incorrupt.

When the diſſentions of the Chriſtian church had

ſettled into that dead and fatal calm, which, under the benumbing influence of an intolerant ſuperſtition, overſpread the Weſtern hemiſphere, then, indeed, a fair opportunity preſented itſelf, to mar the ſacred text, to ſuit the purpoſes of prieſtcraft; and to glut the rapacity of Papal ambition.

But no ſuch attempt was made; and if it had been made, it muſt have miſcarried; firſt, from the ignorance, which prevailed among the clergy, of the original language in which the goſpels were written; and, next, becauſe, if the manuſcripts of the Weſtern church had been ſurreptitiouſly mutilated and interpolated, the genuine text would ſtill have ſurvived in thoſe of the Eaſtern or Greek church.

That no corruptions have found their way into the New Teſtament, which can, in the leaſt, ſhake the fundamental ſtability of the Chriſtian religion, we may learn from this, that, of all the various readings,* which

* The various readings, in Mills's edition of the New Teſtament, have been computed to amount to thirty thouſand.

the diligence of critics has hitherto diſcovered, there are none which, in the leaſt, tend to invalidate the truth of any fact of importance. Amid an almoſt incredible multitude of minute and unimportant variations, all the manuſcripts of the Evangeliſts which have hitherto been collated, *harmonize in recording the facts, which are moſt material to the cauſe of revelation.* There are verbal differences; there are omiſſions, and there are corruptions of little moment; but when we give to theſe, their individual and their collective weight; they will be found rather to add to, than to deduct from the conſiſtency and the authority of the Evangelical teſtimony.

That the Evangelic records themſelves were written in the age to which they are aſcribed, is ſufficiently clear from contemporary hiſtory; and it is equally clear, that the validity of their atteſtation to the truth of the miracles and of the reſurrection of Jeſus, remains the ſame, at this day, as it was on their firſt publication to the world. Diſtance of time has not therefore by any means impaired the conſentient force of the apoſtolic teſtimony to the truth of the reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead; becauſe the teſtimony, in favour of this fact, which was

given immediately after the event, has remained unchanged ever ſince.

But Mr. Hume would ſay, that allowing in all it's extent the ſincerity and the credibility of the teſtimony, ſtill, that the reſurrection of a dead man to life, being contrary to the general laws of nature, and to all the accumulated obſervations of the great maſs of mankind on the operations of thoſe laws, muſt be neceſſarily falſe, and what no teſtimony can prove true. But I muſt obſerve, that we know little of the generality or permanency of the laws of nature themſelves, but from the teſtimony of paſt generations. When we predicate their univerſality, *we, in fact aſſume the truth of teſtimony.*

It is from teſtimony only, that we know that there has been, for the laſt two or three thouſand years, a regular ſucceſſion of ſeaſons or that the ſea has experienced a flux and reflux, or that the air has been diſturbed by tempeſts, or that the moon has, at certain regular periods, waned and increaſed, appeared and diſappeared.

Theſe are laws of nature; but, of their univerſality,

of the regularity and, as it were, continuity of their operations, in time paſt, we really know no more, than thoſe have told us who have gone before us; and whom we may number back for many ages, till we arrive at the confines of an impenetrable obſcurity. Did we not give ſome credit to teſtimony, we ſhould, at laſt, believe nothing but what came within the cognizance of our ſenſes.

It is only from teſtimony, we know that this earth has been inhabited, by man, for five or ſix thouſand years. It is only from teſtimony, we know that this world has, during that period, been cheered by the influence of the ſun, or that the heavens have been illumined with ſtars.

The philoſopher may ſay, that, obſerving with his own eyes the great regularity which, at preſent, exiſts in the motions of the heavenly bodies, and the great uniformity which is viſible, in what are called the laws of nature, he is convinced that their regularity and uniformity have always been the ſame. But whence can the philoſopher, who will give no credit to teſtimony, believe, that with which none of his ſenſes have made him acquainted;

and for which he can bring no other proof, than the proof of teſtimony; to which, he pretends that he ought not to aſſent? His belief of the univerſality and uniformity of the laws of nature, muſt depend on the credit which he gives to the teſtimony of others, confirmed by the reſearches of his own reaſon into the natural order of things, at preſent exiſting in the world.

Now, does Chriſtianity demand belief on leſs ſubſtantial grounds? No;—it requires nothing more than an aſſent to the truth of the teſtimony,—not againſt reaſon;—but on rational principles, and from ſerious enquiry. Chriſtianity, by no means, requires an acquieſcence in the truth of the teſtimony, by which it is eſtabliſhed, without *a previous examination* into it's validity and it's credibility. It calls for ſuch examination firſt, and for ſuch acquieſcence afterwards: and I feel a firm perſuaſion, that if the moſt acute philoſophers would but inveſtigate the truths of Chriſtianity, with that ſerioufneſs and candour, which they themſelves would be the firſt to recommend in other ſubjects of inveſtigation, that they would be as ſtrongly convinced that Jeſus roſe from the dead, as they are that the earth has experienced, for the laſt two thouſand years, regular

viciſſitudes of ſummer and winter, or that the moon has been ſubject to periodical revolutions. The philoſopher may ſay, that he does not diſbelieve ſuch things, becauſe he obſerves the courſe of nature to be the ſame at preſent, and that, therefore, in theſe caſes, his aſſent to paſt teſtimony is confirmed by preſent obſervation;—but, that when teſtimony requires him to aſſent to the truth of a dead man's having riſen again to life, he cannot ſubſcribe to it, becauſe it is contrary to preſent experience; and becauſe all the obſervations which he can make on the irreſiſtible mortality of the human ſpecies, and on the immutability of the laws of nature, contradict it's probability; and are arguments againſt it's truth, which no teſtimony can eſtabliſh.

It muſt be allowed, nevertheleſs, that we know nothing of the identity between the preſent and the former courſe of nature but from the truth of teſtimony. It is from teſtimony we learn that there was, in former ages, the ſame regularity and uniformity in the natural world, and the ſame inſtability, and, as it were, fragility in the moral, that there is at preſent.

The moſt ſkeptical muſt allow, that, at leaſt, a conſiderable part of human knowledge is founded on human teſtimony. And though there may, in particular parts of ſuch knowledge, as is derived from teſtimony, be an intermixture of falſhood, ſtill *the great maſs of it is truth.*

From the influence of aſſociation, and from the greater natural facility of ſpeaking truth than falſhood, truth acquires a power over the heart that may eaſily be diminiſhed, but is ſeldom, if ever, entirely extinguiſhed.

Hence, the combinations of falſhood are uſually the means of their own detection. Such is the ſecret and inviſible power of truth, that it is difficult indeed for any individual to be conſiſtent in a lie;—I mean ſuch a lie as involves a multiplicity of events, an intricate detail of great and minute circumſtances;—but for many individuals to perſevere in ſuch a fabrication, without ſuch glaring incoherencies and inconſiſtencies, as ſhould be their own refutal, is next to impoſſible.

Falſhood, by being always aſſociated, at leaſt, with ſome degree of averſion, requires a greater effort of the

mind than truth; the latter, according with the natural feelings of rectitude, and connected with agreeable ſenſation, flows, as it were, from the heart with eaſe and promptitude; while the former counteracted, in almoſt every ſtep of it's progreſs, by the natural ſentiments, the affections and the aſſociations of the mind has to encounter obſtacles, that are not readily ſubdued. Thus we ſee that nature has provided for the defence of truth, and particularly the truth of teſtimony, by oppoſing ſo many difficulties to conſiſtency in falſhood.

Carrying the foregoing obſervations in his mind, let the moſt ſkeptical ſit down to examine, with ſerioufneſs and candour, the truth of that teſtimony, by which the fact of the reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead is ſubſtantiated. Let him carefully weigh the nature of the teſtimony, it's multiplicity, it's variety, it's conſiſtency; and then let him compare it with the circumſtances of the witneſſes.

Let the ſkeptic conſider, amid a multitude of minute and unimportant variations, and which are rather a proof of undeſigning integrity, than of deſigning forgery, what a perfect conſiſtency and harmony there is in the

whole maſs of the teſtimony, and what an air of candour, of truth and ſimplicity pervades the whole narrative of the fact, in the Four Evangeliſts. There are no marks of that diſguiſe, that duplicity, that embarraſſment, which are almoſt neceſſarily attached to falſhood. The relations of the Evangeliſts poſſeſs thoſe inimitable features of an eaſy, unaſſuming confidence, which are characteriſtic of artleſs veracity.

The ſkeptic ſhould, likewiſe, contraſt the circumſtances of the witneſſes with the teſtimony they delivered. Did their teſtimony tend to improve their circumſtances? Certainly not. It involved them in indigence and miſery; but this indigence and miſery they voluntarily endured, *rather than keep back the teſtimony.*

Men never act without motives. The motive that could urge the Apoſtles to perſiſt in ſuch a groſs and palpable falſhood, as the reſurrection of Jeſus to life (ſuppoſing it to be a lie of their own invention), muſt have been ſtrong indeed, to overcome their natural love of truth, and to ſear their hearts againſt thoſe ſenſations of remorſe and ſhame, which, at leaſt, in ſome degree,

are the invariable aſſociates of impoſition and of falſhood.

But, in the caſe we are conſidering, what motive could there have been powerful enough to operate this effect? The proſpect of ſome great temporal advantage has often induced men to maintain, with reſolute effrontery, and, at every hazard, ſome artful ſcheme of intereſted impoſture; but there never yet was an inſtance, in which men have perſevered in ſuch a ſcheme, for the ſake of pure, unalloyed and hopeleſs miſery. And yet we place the Apoſtles in theſe very circumſtances; we make miſery inconſolable, and wretchedneſs unqualified, the object of their wiſhes, and the end of their exertions, if we ſuppoſe the reſurrection of Jeſus to be nothing more than a cunningly deviſed fable, of their own invention.

Suppoſing the truth of Chriſtianity a fiction, it is abſolutely impoſſible, that the conduct of the Apoſtles ſhould have been ſuch as ſacred and profane hiſtory concur to repreſent it; and as the circumſtances of the world, at that time, combine to prove that it muſt have been. It is full as improbable, that twelve men, in their ſenſes,

ſhould perſiſt in a lie, for the ſole ſake of exchanging comfort for anguiſh, and happineſs for miſery, as that a dead man ſhould riſe to life. The former is as great a deviation from thoſe moral laws, which influence the courſe of human actions, as the latter is from thoſe natural laws, which cauſe the mortality of the human ſpecies.

If the philoſopher will not allow the truth of one miracle, he muſt, at leaſt, allow the truth of what is quite as miraculous, full as improbable, and quite as irreconcileable to the ordinary courſe of events.

The conduct of the Apoſtles, not to mention others, who were all men of ſound judgment, good common-ſenſe, and plain, unſophiſticated underſtandings, cannot poſſibly be reconciled to any experience of human nature, or to any knowledge of human motives, — without allowing the truth of the Chriſtian miracles, and particularly that fundamental miracle, the adamantine baſe of the Chriſtian doctrine, — the reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead.

Can any philoſopher allow that the general principles of human nature, and the general incitements to human

action, were the ſame in the days of the Apoſtles, that they are at preſent, without allowing the ſincerity and integrity of their teſtimony, and the conſequent truth of the facts which it records? Can any philoſopher, who is capable of calm and diſpaſſionate reflection, for a moment imagine that ſo many individuals, all capable of feeling pain and pleaſure, and diſtinguiſhing their differences, ſhould, without a ſingle intereſted motive, either of pleaſure, fame or fortune, voluntarily engage in a long and heart-rending ſcene of complicated agonies, for no other purpoſe, than to vindicate aſſertions which they knew to be falſe?

In every view, which I can take of the ſubject, it appears to me that the converſe of Mr. Hume's propoſition, is that, which in this inſtance, we ought to embrace; and that "it is far more probable that the reſurrection of Jeſus ſhould be true, than that the accumulated teſtimony in it's favour ſhould be falſe."—The Philoſopher, who obſtinately perſeveres in denying a miracle, which is ſo well atteſted, only becauſe it appears to his dim perceptions and limited capacity, contrary to the uſual courſe of nature, ſeems, in ſome degree, to reſemble a perſon, who ſhould refuſe to believe, that

other countries were ſubject to the concuſſion of earthquakes and the deſolation of volcanos, becauſe he had never obſerved them in his own; and therefore might ſuppoſe ſuch phenomena, contrary to what his narrow obſervation might induce him to think the ordinary courſe of nature.

The obſtinate averſion to believe in a miracle, ſo well atteſted as that of Chriſt's reſurrection, would vaniſh, if the unbeliever would conſider—that the world has moral as well as natural laws, and, that the reſurrection of a dead man to life, though it may ſeem contrary to the latter, might, in the particular inſtance which is alledged, have been highly agreeable to the former; and he ſhould beſides conſider—that a ſerious and comprehenſive enquiry into the ſyſtem of nature and the ways of providence, would prove natural and moral laws to be eſſentially the ſame, and to harmonize exactly in all their operations; and that the reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead, though apparently anomalous to the firſt, might, at the time, and in the circumſtances, in which it took place, have been analogous to both.

Allowing the truth of the reſurrection of Jeſus, the practical inferences, that are to be derived from it, muſt be obvious to every one.——The queſtion about the nature of the ſentient principle, whether it be formed of periſhable or imperiſhable materials, whether it be a combination of groſs matter, or a ſpark of æthereal fire, whether it ſurvive the body or mingle with it's duſt, is of little importance; when we know that "Chriſt is riſen from the dead, and become the firſt fruits of them that ſlept. For ſince by man came death, by man came alſo the reſurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive." Vid. 1 Cor. xv.

The belief of a future ſtate of exiſtence, is abſolutely neceſſary to ſtrengthen the power of ſelf-denial; to incite to the practice of diſintereſted virtue, and to refine benevolence from the pollutions of ſelfiſhneſs. * I agree

* Chriſtianity does not propoſe *entirely to extinguiſh* the principle of ſelf-intereſt, but to alter it's direction, and by urging us to forego a leſs or temporal ſelf-intereſt, which repoſes with the duſt of man in the grave, to aſpire after an intereſt ample as eternity. For this purpoſe, it conſtantly places before our eyes the crown of glory that fadeth not away;—it points to a ſtate of happineſs beyond the grave, exempt from corruption and

with Mr. Godwin, that men may be brought to act from diſtintereſted motives, and that their general conduct may be regulated on a ſyſtem of pure benevolence, but I deny that the principle which he aſſumes can ever produce this effect; nor can any principle whatever, whoſe operations are limited within the horizon of this life, and have no relation to a ſtate beyond it.

The only poſſible way, in which to make men act from motives of pure benevolence, (as far as it reſpects perſonal conſiderations or worldly intereſt,) is by teaching them, univerſally to connect the idea of benevolence, and of every tender exertion of human kindneſs, with the hope, not of a preſent, but of a future and eternal recompenſe, with an intereſt greater than any which this world contains. To effect this, the belief of a future exiſtence becomes an *eſſential requiſite;* and this belief

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decay; and teaches us to conſider the temple of charity as the only way by which it is to be approached.

"Lay not," ſaid Jeſus with his characteriſtic ſimplicity of manner, "up for yourſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal. But lay up for yourſelves treaſures in heaven; where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor ſteal." Vid. Matt vi.

ought to be ſo impreſſed, as that the ſtrength of it's conviction ſhould, in a great meaſure, abſorb every low, vain and ſenſual conſideration.

Mankind cannot poſſibly be induced, by any the moſt ſpecious argument, or theory, *which is relative to this life only*, to omit, in their dealings and intercourſe with their fellow-creatures, the fond and captivating calculatings of preſent intereſt, and to practiſe a pure benevolence;—a benevolence, not prompted by temporal motives,—while they think this world the limits of their exiſtence, the everlaſting boundary of all their perceptions, their affections, their hopes and fears. But it is far different, when they look on this earth as the mere infancy of their being, and as a paſſage to another; where their happineſs ſhall be proportioned to the degree in which they have cheriſhed and have exerciſed the benevolent affections.

It may be ſaid, that pleaſurable ſenſation being the conſtant motive to, or object of human action, pure diſintereſtedneſs is unattainable by man. But let it be conſidered, that the belief of a future ſtate does not tend ſo much to deſtroy the principle of ſelf-intereſt, as to

refine it from all it's baſe and polluted elements, and to ſublime it into a pure and unalloyed diſintereſtedneſs, as far as any human and worldly recompenſe is concerned.

It muſt likewiſe be conſidered, that in the breaſt of the Chriſtian, pleaſurable ſenſation, ceaſing to be a motive to ſelfiſhneſs, will be changed into the ſtrongeſt motive to pure benevolence; for, the farther advances which the Chriſtian makes in true holineſs, the more he will eſteem the joys of immortality, though at a diſtance, a ſource of purer happineſs than any intereſt or poſſeſſion on this ſide the grave.

Who has not felt, and been cheered by the kind ſolace of hope? Hope is an oblivion of miſery, and a fore-taſte of happineſs. She gilds life in it's darkeſt moments; and makes the heart ſenſible to the touch of joy, even in the ſevereſt agonies. Were it not for this kind and ſeldom-failing viſitor to the breaſts of the wretched, mankind would ſink into languor under the leaſt affliction. It is hope, which gives energy to fortitude. It is hope, which keeps ſo many thouſands of human ſufferers light and buoyant above the waves of adverſity. It is hope, whoſe benign and heavenly ſmile,

adminiſters cordial comfort to the priſoner in his cell, and the captive in his chains.—But to whom is hope ſo kind and conſtant a comforter as to the Chriſtian? To whom does ſhe impart ſuch ſweet or ſuch laſting conſolations? In other breaſts, hope alternately lives and dies; but, in the breaſt of the Chriſtian, ſhe ſhines with immortal beams; and, inſtead of forſaking him in his laſt moments, ſhe hails his cloſing eyes to the ſight of "the everlaſting hills;" and offers to his graſp "the crown that fadeth not away."

A PICTURE OF
CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

A few thoughts on the free diſcuſſion of the truths of revelation.

No man's conviction, as far as it is rational, can be greater that the degree of his knowledge. Thoſe who think otherwiſe, are only blind to their ignorance; and their preſumption is folly. They are apt to be hardened in error, and to oppoſe a mere *ipſe dixit* to the plaineſt arguments.

A man's faith in revelation, and of courſe his obedience to it's precepts, is uſually according to his conviction of it's truth. But the truth of revelation, not being perceptible to the organs of ſenſe, or capable of a pal-

pable demonſtration, can only be aſcertained by diligent inveſtigation. Such inveſtigation of revealed religion was certainly intended by it's all-wiſe author; becauſe it's evidences are ſo arranged and modified, that there can be no conviction of it's truth without ſerious enquiry.

Had the Almighty intended to have precluded all diſcuſſion of the truths of revelation, he would have rendered it's evidence ſo clear, ſimple and indiſputable, that no two people could have differed on the ſubject. At preſent, there are no two people who think preciſely alike on all the points of Chriſtianity.

Why has the divine author of revealed religion permitted ſo vaſt a multiplicity of opinions on it's truth and doctrines? Certainly for the ſake of exciting enquiry, and of promoting diſcuſſion; for which there would have been neither neceſſity nor motive, if all men had thought alike on the ſubject. A complete uniformity of opinions might likewiſe, by promoting religious indifference, have been injurious to practical piety. The various ſhades of faith and degrees of conviction

which prevail in the world, were likewiſe probably intended to teach us charity in our opinions, and humility in our judgments. Contented with our own conviction, we are not to imprecate anathemas on thoſe who are not convinced in the ſame way.

If there be any to whom the evidences of Chriſtianity may ſeem inſufficient or inconcluſive, from their wanting the inclination or the candour to give them a due and ſober conſideration; are we juſtified in perſecuting them, either for their ignorance or their illiberality? Certainly not.——The genuine meekneſs of Chriſtianity ought rather to incline us to behold their blindneſs with compaſſion, and their errors with forbearance: and to pray that God may open their eyes to ſee the truth; or may touch their hearts with that conviction of it's importance, as may make them examine it's evidences with ſerioufneſs and candour; and which cannot fail, in the end, of impreſſing their minds with faith in Chriſt Jeſus.

Chriſtians ſeldom pray with that fervor and ſincerity which they ought, for the converſion of unbelievers.

They too often condemn them moſt uncharitably to damnation, without ever breathing a wiſh to heaven for their converſion to the light of immortality. The bleſſed Jeſus evidently intended, that the converſion of unbelievers ſhould make one of the daily petitions of believing Chriſtians. "Thy kingdom come," is a ſupplication that Infidelity may vaniſh, and that the belief and the practical influence of Chriſtianity may prevail in all the world. But with what ſincerity can we utter this petition, while a bitter jealouſy is rankling in our hearts; while we ourſelves diſcover none of that mild ſpirit that was in Jeſus, and rather ſtrive to exaſperate than convince the gainſayer?

If Infidelity have any arguments to produce againſt the truth of revelation, let them be calmly and rationally refuted: but if it can produce nothing but frothy abuſe and virulent miſrepreſentation, the beſt reply is—that dignified ſilence and compaſſion which Jeſus himſelf diſplayed, when he was rebuked and reviled. Can we follow a better example than that of Jeſus?

Falſhood and rancour always counteract themſelves.

We are all convinced, that neither the ſallies of wit, nor the perverſeneſs of malice, can ſhake the philoſophy of Newton. Should we puniſh the jackdaw for mocking the eagle? Have we any reaſon to dread, leaſt the blaſphemies of an individual ſhould overturn the religion of the God of nature? The mere ſuppoſition is a diſgrace to our belief. The ſcoffs of impiety cannot ſhake the fabric of heaven.*

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* The writings of the infidel will not unfrequently be found to do more ſervice than injury to the Chriſtian cauſe. The frequent aſſault of the citadel, keeps the garriſon awake. The attacks of the infidel, call forth the energies of the faithful, they excite arguments to ſtrengthen the weak, or to confirm the wavering, which might otherwiſe never have appeared.

It is a very common, but a very miſtaken ſuppoſition, that the writings of the French Deiſts produced that aſtoniſhing degree of infidelity that prevailed in France. Thoſe writings were only a ſubordinate and ſecondary cauſe. The primary and eſſential cauſe, was the groſs and palpable corruptions of the Romiſh Church. Thoſe corruptions, accumulating for centuries, at laſt produced a monſter that devoured it's mother. The Deiſtical philoſophers might have haſtened his birth, but they had no ſhare in his formation. If the Deiſtical writers had been the eſſential cauſe of the declenſion of Chriſtianity in France, the ſame cauſe, ſtill operating, would have prevented it's revival. Chriſtianity would have ſunk, to riſe no more! But there is the ſtrongeſt proof, that the corruptions of the church and the clergy, rather than the ſcoffs of the philoſophers were the cauſe of the prevailing infidelity in France: for the beſt informed travellers into that country aſſure us, that the infidelity

The Almighty who diſpenſed his religion to mankind, has, no doubt, provided, in the common order of things, for it's preſervation; and it is full as abſurd to ſuppoſe, that the Infidel can arreſt the progreſs of revealed truth, as that he can ſtop the flowing of the ocean. The moral world, as well as the natural, has it's peculiar laws; though thoſe of the latter are more open to our obſervation, becauſe more familiar to our ſenſes.

Man being conſtituted a free and rational being, the evidence of revelation was ſo diſpoſed, as that it might controul his conduct through the medium of his judgment. It was a rule to him, not by conſtraint but by

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itſelf is declining, now the cauſe that produced it is no more! The loathſome ſenſuality, the proſtitute venality, and the ſplendid hypocriſy of the French church and the French clergy have vaniſhed, and the religion of Jeſus is beginning to appear with more of it's primitive ſimplicity. It it is now probable that Chriſtianity will, in the courſe of a few years, when the preſent atrocious tyranny of the directorial ruffians ſhall have paſſed away, ſtrike a much deeper root than before into the minds and the affections of the French; that the faith of the people, no longer cheated by the mummery of Popery, but founded on knowledge, will be immoveable; aud that all the combined powers of Deiſm will be too feeble to do it any further injury. In this perſuaſion, as a Chriſtian and a miniſter of Jeſus, I feel a happineſs that I cannot expreſs; and I humbly implore the Supreme Diſpoſer that it may not be illuſory.

choice. Hence it's truth was propoſed as an object of rational enquiry; and to this enquiry we are prompted by it's connection, not with a periſhable, but an eternal intereſt; and which, conſequently, renders it an object of ſuperior importance to every human conſideration.

Thoſe who think that the truth of revelation ought not to be diſcuſſed, are by no means it's beſt friends. It's diſcuſſion ſeems to be an injunction of the Almighty, and deſignedly rendered neceſſary, by the very nature of it's proofs; and of this I am firmly convinced, that the more it is diſcuſſed, the more will it's beauty be unfolded and it's truth be diſplayed—the more will the love of it's laws and the conviction of it's importance approach to univerſality. Men ought not to be Chriſtians merely from hereſay or from faſhion, but from conviction.—Every Chriſtian ſhould be able to give a reaſon of the "hope that is in him;" and thoſe who cannot do this, though they may not be Infidels, hardly deſerve the appellation of believers.

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WITH that frank ingenuouſneſs which is ſo congenial to a love of truth, and with that energy which a good cauſe always inſpires, I have attempted to vindicate the combined, and (as I humbly think) indiviſible intereſts of revealed religion, of free enquiry and of human happineſs. * Inſtead of adminiſtering freſh fuel to that factious rage, and that ſpirit of bitterneſs which is

* The author has been ſcrupulouſly attentive not to contaminate this volume with any infuſion of political animoſity.—If the reader be anxious to be acquainted with his political opinions, he will find them ſketched with plainneſs, with ſincerity, and with moderation, in "An Addreſs to the People, &c." 8vo. 1s. 6d. Rivingtons, and White. This little work which has been commended by critics, of a well-earned celebrity, (vid. Mont. Rev. Feb. 1799.) was written ſoon after Lord Nelſon's victory, but (perhaps unfortunately for the author) the publication was delayed till Chriſtmas; when the French arms, more deſtructive than the lava of Veſuvius, were preparing to revenge the loſſes of Aboukir in the plunder of Naples.

unhappily ſpreading through theſe once-happy kingdoms, I have endeavoured to ſoften the animoſities of faction by the precepts of benevolence, and to inſpire even the breaſts of bigots with Chriſtian moderation.—If I have contributed only a mite to this great end, it will cheer with many gleams of pleaſure the boſom of one, who, in his way through life, has had much mournful experience of it's viciſſitudes; and who can truly aver, that he never heard, without a wiſh to ſooth, the piercing cries of human miſery.

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